

**RETRO
RAMPAGE
WREAKED!**

///ZK SPECTRUM///

"IT LIVES!!!"

**OH
THE
HUMANITY!**



***Al 'n' Dave's
A to Z of Speed Reviews***



ONCE IN EVERY LIFETIME, TWO GREAT MINDS COME TOGETHER TO
IMPART THEIR WISDOM TO THE WORLD AND DEMONSTRATE
THEIR IMMENSE INTELLIGENCE AND KNOWLEDGE TO THE
IGNORANT MASSES...

THIS IS SUCH A TIME...

A MIGHTY TASK WAS PASSED DOWN FROM ON HIGH TO TWO
HEROES, WHO WERE PROVED MAN ENOUGH TO BE EQUAL TO THE
DIVINE MISSION AT HAND. IT WAS THEIR CYCLOPEAN
RESPONSIBILITY TO PRODUCE HASTILY ASSEMBLED OPINIONS WITH
REGARD TO COMPLEX PROGRAMS CREATED FOR A HUMBLE, BUT
MIGHTY, MACHINE...

AND THOUGH IT TOOK ONE OF THEM RATHER LONGER THAN
ANTICIPATED, WHILE THE OTHER SAW FIT TO TREAT THE MATTER
AS CURSORILY AS POSSIBLE, LO, AT LENGTH THE MATTER WAS
CONCLUDED...

WHAT YOU HOLD IN YOUR UNWORTHY HANDS NOW IS A
MIGHTY TOME FOR THE AGES, AND YOU ARE INCALCULABLY
FORTUNATE TO BE IN A POSITION TO SURVEY THEIR FINDINGS,
EVEN IF YOU ONLY READ A LITTLE BIT EVERY NOW AND THEN...

LET THESE WRITINGS STAND FOREVER IN THE ANALS, *sorry*, ANNALS
OF HISTORY, TO SHINE A LIGHT ON THOSE WHO ARE LOST IN THE
DARK AND TO PROVIDE COMFORT TO THOSE IN GREATEST NEED...

OR SOMETHING...

+ LET THE AWESOMENESS COMMENCE +

A ZX SPECTRUM - IT LIVES PRODUCTION

WITH EXTRAORDINARY ARTWORK BY LISA WOODWORTH



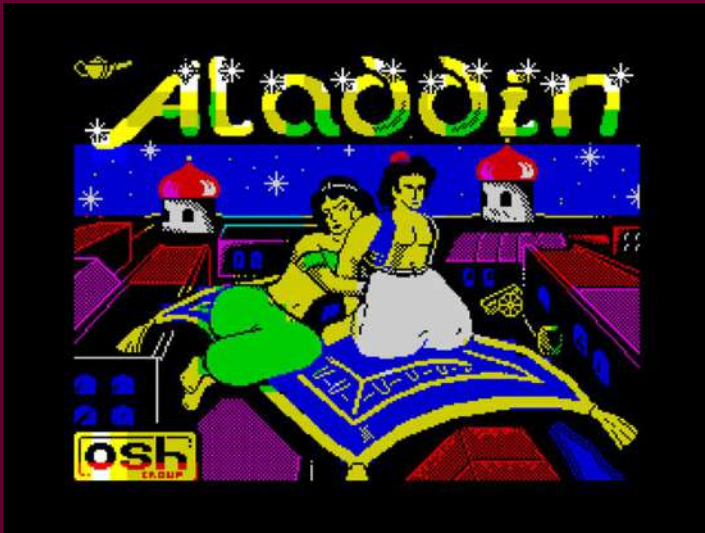
AL



DAVE

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Nice load screen, but has that huge woman got our hero prisoner here?

And this is how this particular goon lost an eye



A perfectly timed screenshot if I may say so myself



Ah, thanks for holding that advert guys, much obliged



ALADDIN

(Oleg Origin, 1997)

Programmed by the legendary Oleg Origin and released as part of a compilation in 1997 called... "1997". Can this game hope to live up to the other two games in the package? Only **The Dark** and **Metal Man**! Good luck with that. As for the plot, well, it presumably involves a magic lamp, a genie and some real big pants. More than this I do not know. Take it away, Dave...

Dave: "Wow, that's a big and colourful sprite. I like the way he tippy-toes everywhere, even walking on air, while leaning at a highly distressing 45 degree angle. At first I thought he had a bald spot, but I think it might be a hat. Combat is a bit flippin' hard though, not helped by someone off-screen constantly chucking vases and knives at you. And also Aladdin's bizarre reluctance to properly use his cutlass."

*Al: "I too observed the extreme bigness of the main character, it feels like you're controlling a giant. Or trying to play **Manic Miner** as Berk from **Trapdoor**. The gameplay is rather woolly, just tentative jumping and fighting that looks more like tickling. Also you get 9 lives, but when you die you go right back to the start, due to checkpoints not having been invented yet in 1997, so frustration is guaranteed."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: "A bit of a clunky game to play, I think Oleg's later releases vastly improved after this one."

5/10

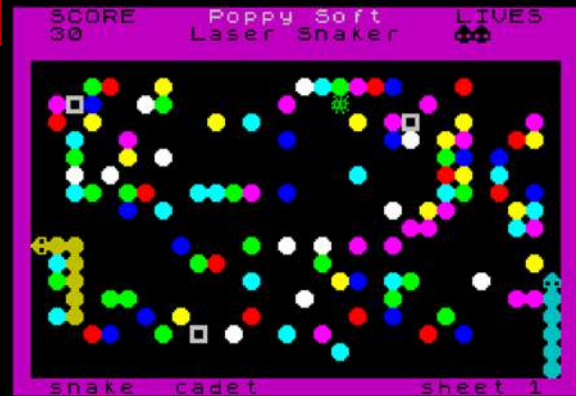
Al: "Oleg Oranges is a latter-day legend, so he doesn't need us to love everything he's done."

5/10



Just about the only task anyone managed to do on Trapdoor

Before becoming a Spec-legend, Stephen Crow made this fun slitherer of a game



"Okay, I'll just climb these steps. Oof... I banged my head... not surprising really.."

Yes I'd say the condition of that poor sap plummeting downward is definitely 'red'



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: "So tell me fellas, what's your fave Speccy game with ginormous sprites? And conversely, what's your fave Speccy game with teeny weeny sprites? Thirdly, what am I doing talking about Spectrum games?"

Al: "It's got to be **Trapdoor** for me, Lieutenant. Mr. Priestley thinking big as ever. Never played any of his other huge sprite games though in fairness. As for teeny graphics, the recent **Tokimal** perhaps, they're small but perfectly formed. Or from the olden days, how about Stephen Crow's **Laser Snaker**?!"

Dave: "I did like **Cookkhu... Cucch... Err**, the walking blokey from **Tir Na Nog/Dun Darach**. Though a shout out to the comically humungous sprite in **Merlin** - perhaps that one was a "draw me a wizard sprite please" scenario where measurements were miscalculated, a bit like the Stonehenge monument in **Spinal Tap** but the other way round? As for teeny weeny sprites... Hmmm, gotta be **Ant Attack**, and in a sadistic way I used to like watching the little dudes in **Zzoom** fly up in the air when you shot them (like everyone did, even though you're not supposed to)."

Al: "Ah, fond murderous memories!"

Dave: "Hang on, I've got it now... **Cuckoolinen... Cookiedrain... Cuckoldlane... ah forget it.**"



I'm not sure how to feel about this picture

Uh oh, definitely getting Underwulde vibes about that drop at the bottom



Bounce yourself silly and grab that chocolate coin while you're at it



Why's it always raining in this game? Fetch my wet weather bootees!



BOOTEE

(Mojon Twins, 2013)

Tragically I can find no instructions for this game. And it really is a shame as I'd love to know what the heck's going on here. We've clearly got a bit of cunning punning going on. There are no pirates evident here, just an odd-looking girl with a boot for her lower half. She clearly has quite a bouncy bootee as she boings crazily all around the place. But what's her story? Did she enter a teleporter and someone threw a boot in with her at the last minute? Let's hope some sense can be made of it.

Dave: "Y'know, I used to think 'Das Boot' (as in the film) meant 'The Boot' in German. And the Mojons' 'Churrera engine' always made me think of churros. That being said, and also irrelevant, apparently there was a completion prize for this game, which explains why it's so bloomin' hard. It's the uncontrollable bouncing of a power-up-free Wizball, along with the annoying 'knock-you-off-yer-bubble' creatures from Underwulde."

Al: "This is certainly a game with bounce. Our heroine can reach quite a height in her boot, even if we're not sure why she's doing it. I can only guess she's trying to find a magical shoehorn to ease her out of there. She collects coins and keys to open doors, occasionally finding health pickups along the way. It's reasonable fun for half an hour's play but ultimately pretty odd. Did Dave beat my record of 13 coins I wonder..."

SCORING TIME!

Dave: "No comment. I did play it for a while actually, perhaps I'm just a masochist. "Like a rubber ball I come bouncing back to Boo(tee)""

6/10

Al: "That's quite enough gangster rap references from you, young man! It's random stuff, but fun if you've got time for a quick bounce."

6/10



Sometimes monochrome looks great. Black and white bouncy fun to be had in Bounder

Ain't (Cosmic) Payback a bitch?



Is that Ike from South Park in the green there?



Looks like pumpkin pie's back on the menu, boys



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"My wife won't forgive me if I don't ask youse guys this. What's your favourite game with a bounce mechanic, whatever that might be?"*

Al: *"Well lieutenant, I confess. To buying **Bounder** and very much enjoying it, just a shame the sequel never made it to the Speccy. Still no reason to buy a C64 though. In recent times, **Cosmic Payback** ain't bad, if a bit tricky."*

Dave: *"I've already mentioned mine – yep, it's **Wizball**. Slightly preferred the Amiga version (am I allowed to say that? It had the cute cat) but the Speccy version is great to play too. As you say, **Bounder** is also pretty cool, silver medal for that one. And I quite liked **Cauldron II**, but on reflection the little pumpkin is just a tad too hard to control."*

Al: *"No, you are not allowed to say you prefer the Amiga version. This site isn't called **"The Amiga is great"** y'know."*

Dave: *"I'm terribly sorry and take back everything I said on the subject. Especially since you are actually writing this line yourself to give the impression that you have a mate."*

Al: *"Stop that!"*

COMANDO II



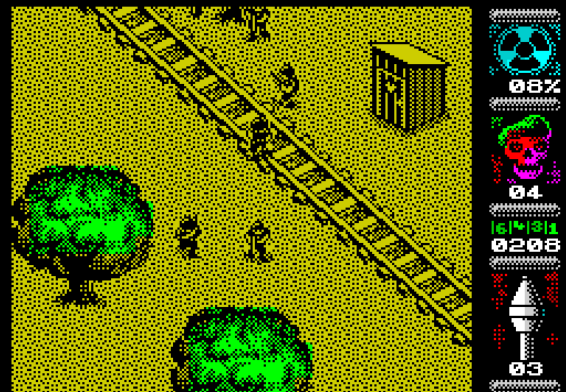
This must be the helicopter that crashes, landing you in the brown stuff once more

This service station is really busy. Hope they do a good Greggs here



They're all lining up to have a go in Marty McFly's DeLorean

It would be officially awesome if the odd train came rumbling down this track, flattening all and sundry



COMMANDO II *(Ultrasoft, 1992)*

Alright, so this came out during the classic Speccy era, not the modern one. But since that was in **Slovakia**, it might as well be new to us. It reached the shores of the UK thanks to **Bumfun** (*seriously?*) in 2010 and the rest is highly litigious history. Arnie must have consented to be on the Slovakian version's cover too, top man! After your last successful mission (*you finished **Commando**, right?*) your helicopter crashes, since you're clearly cursed. Once again you alone survive and are left to go commando behind enemy lines. Oh, and the place is radioactive too.

Dave: *"Aaargh, my eyes are poor, my nose is knackered... I can't see those bullets with the dotty scenery! The background looks nice but I don't think it needed the 'Doh' treatment (hopefully you get that reference). Then again, the 'pow pow' gun sound is a bit better than the original. I only managed to get to stage 3, is that good?"*

Al: *"Same as me, mate, so not at all good! **Elite** probably never heard about this hugely unofficial Slovakian sequel to their smash hit. And whaddyaknow, this is as much bullet spraying fun as the original. With a graphics overhaul and the chance of rescuing hostages in return for some highly destructive weapons, it's like 1985 all over again. And you can fire rocket launchers and throw grenades diagonally in this one, and even backwards, whoop! The only thing missing is some great music, like in the **hacked** version of the original."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Enjoyable to play until the enemy soldiers start chucking grenades and rockets at you."*

7/10

Al: *"We've seen it before, yes. But it was great then and still pretty darn good now."*

8/10



Only Joffa Smith could cause this much joyous carnage

Great game but wonder what the heck 'Ikari' means?



Another Thorpe classic here. Most soldiery types do go bright red when doing their thing too

One of the less injurious levels of Combat School



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: "So, you like to play soldier eh, dweebos? Well what's your fave gung-ho hut-hut-hut muscle-bound game on the Speccy then?"

Al: "Woah there, lieutenant! Possibly **Commando** itself or **Ikari Warriors**, but more likely the outrageously violent **Cobra**, even if your average go lasts little over a minute. I could never get the hang of that other Joffa hit **Green Beret** though. **Rambo** had its moments too."

Dave: "How about **Combat School**? Or to use its other name (that I've just made up), "**Daley gets Drafted**". I discovered the trick of using a joystick and doing 'crazy circles' rather than 'horizontal waggles', if you get my drift. I always got the nervy sweaty palm thing when I got to the instructor fight. They don't make difficulty spikes like that any more."

"However, **Ikari Warriors** has always been my fave, I even reckon it's better than the mighty **Commando** (Elite's one). You can run over people (including your co-player bud) in a tank. Marvellous stuff."

Al: "Tanks Dave."

Dave: "Tanks Al."



Great screen, though I can't tell if he's meant to be teeny-tiny or if it's just the angle

Yeah, destroy Argon! What did that gas ever do for us anyway?



Don't get your flat-top stuck in those hairdryers at the bottom

I'm not sure there's time to whip up a quick sour dough deep-pan



DROID BUSTER ***(Ariel Endaraues, 2019)***

Why do I keep picking Spanish games? Let's see how far my one year GCSE gets me with this inlay then. All I have to go on otherwise is that this is a version of the C64 classic *(no such thing)* **Mandroid**. A town called Hexagon is situated in a technological, erm mecca maybe, but the A.I. goes A.W.O.L. and declares war on the human race. A guy with robotic arms has to bash his way to the main CPU and give it what for. Let's see how right I was there.

Dave: "Please sir, can I have a gun instead? My robotic arm is hopeless, it doesn't seem to be able to hit anything... Oh, so you have to hit things at certain times/points? I see. Unfortunately, the energy drain from touching one of your enemies is so severe it seems to kill me instantly, every time, and I only have one life so have to go back to the start of the game."

Al: "This game starts off very nicely. There's some moody music a la Target; Renegade, and some very nice colourful graphics. Your guy impressively extends his... arm to obliterate his robotic foes, but timing is critical. Get it wrong and your health depletes super-fast. His random outbursts about wanting pizza add to the fun, and remind me of a certain co-reviewer."

SCORING TIME!

Dave: "Slightly annoying. Where's my pizza?"

5.5/10

Al: "Pretty good, only let down by slightly repetitive gameplay after a while."

7/10

FACTORY BREAKOUT



This looks like the cover of a book for babies, not a bewildered robot escaping its murderous foes

RoboCop prepares to enact a rectal breach upon an innocent bystander



Quazatron – a grittier take on Marble Madness

You can make your own Alien 8 at home quite easily with just a couple of cardboard boxes



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: "Is it more fun to fight robots or to be a robot? Please give some spurious examples to support your argument."

AI: "Zirky from *Factory Breakout* was a fun droid, remember him? And that *Alien 8* guy. Even the C-droid in *Worse Things Happen At Sea*, though he didn't say much. On the other hand, you do shoot a load of bots in *Delta's Shadow*, and that's hellafun. Maybe being *RoboCop* is the perfect compromise?"

Dave: "Well That's a difficult one, lieutenant... As a *Laser Squad/Rebelstar* fan, fighting against robots is ace! Though you do have the odd droid on your own team. As for *W.T.H.A.S.*, controlling that flippin' robot in a sinking vessel used to stress me out so I stopped playing it."

"Nah, there are too many games where you play a robot that are cool, probably. *Alien 8* is OK I suppose. In *Quazatron* you're both a robot AND fight against robots. Aargh, I can't decide. Your question is faulty. Does not compute... Malthunction... Malfunnythinkin..."

Columbo: "Take this one back to the station, boys. Guy's gone doolally."

AI: "DAAAAAAVEEEEE! NOOOOOOOO! Right, what's next..."



Some nice work by Mark R. Jones here. No risk of getting sued by Melbourne House this time

Put-put-put goes your little spaceship, flying above the planet Bloxonia (not really)



Things are looking a bit dicey as you've wandered into an asteroid belt without due care and attention

This planet looks nicer at least. Apart from its strange wildlife



ENCYCLOPAEDIA GALACTICA

(Retro Fusion, 2012)

It took 8 people to make this game, so it should be great. Jonathan Cauldwell (*not Ross, as my predictive text bot has helpfully suggested*) was the main dude, and ex-Ocean and **Load Dij-Dijer** Mark Jones did the load screen. Nice. From your space station in Eradanus, you must choose a planet to explore/exploit various new species of life. You need 3 specimens of each organism to examine, then you write your findings in the **Encyclopaedia Galactica**, your employers. Just keep your ship fuelled and watch out for the more lively lifeforms or they'll have ya on toast.

AI: *"Well this game looks impressively large-scale and epic. I never fail to be impressed by these sort of things. Trouble is, I always fail to have the patience to get anywhere in 'em. I probably need a few weeks' play to do it justice, but that wouldn't be a very **speedy** review now would it? So suffice it to say it looks and sounds good, and would almost certainly reward anyone with any patience, i.e. not me. I got me one specimen researched, but that was it for now, and most of the planets seemed dead, maaaaan. Think I missed the point. Hope **Dave's** review's better."*

Dave: *"Did you ever have people knocking on your door in the '80s trying to sell sets of encyclopaedias? Got me wondering who the last person was in the profession. Maybe it's in the last set of Encyclopaediaseses. Wha? Oh, the game, right. Well, it's like **Elite** meets **Thrust**, meets **Asteroids**, meets err... I guess the anagram game is reminiscent of **Ranarama**? Nice funky tune playing in your space pod thing as well, though the thrust-y engine noise started hurting my ears after a while. To be honest I can't really give this game a fair review in the time I've had to play it. There's a lot to it. What were you thinking giving me this one to talk about, AI? For crying out loud..."*

SCORING TIME!

AI: *"Stop crying out loud Dave, it's upsetting. **E.G.** is a potentially awesome space jaunt in the right hands I reckon."*

7.5/10

Dave: *"Actually I did enjoy it. I enjoyed flying around planets trying to find, trap and tranquilize little critters, including **Daleks** for some reason. And the little event pop-ups are quite entertaining."*

9/10



In the future, we will all travel places in triangles

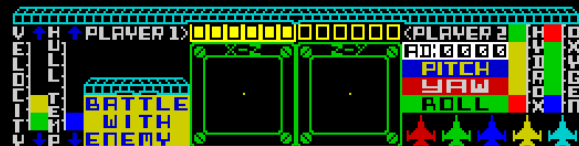
The scary face from the Gyron loading screen comes back to haunt another game



This game was decent. But let's face it, it was really just the B-side to Spectacle



One of the rare vectors in Starion which wasn't an enormous letter of the alphabet



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"So what kind of epic adventures in space have you embarked upon, o great keyboard space cadets? That's sarcasm by the way."*

AI: *"My space adventures have hardly ever spluttered off the ground really, lieutenant. I bought **Academy** with its ginormous box, then barely played it. Weirdly I've never touched **Elite**. **Dark Star** I never got to grips with, but I did enjoy the high score table and **Spectacle**. I guess I got furthest in **Starion** but then got bored of doing space anagrams pretty quickly."*

Dave: *"Well the bestest and grand-daddiest of all space adventures has to be **Elite**... Woah, what a guy, erm, game! Talk about expansive, immersive, and...other things involving 'sieves' I guess? The universe is so big I'm sure there's a sieve somewhere."*

AI: *"I reckon when it comes to space-'em-ups, you're at least a good **Buzz Aldrin**, maybe even **Louis Armstrong** himself. I'm more **Michael Collins**."*

Dave: *"True dat. Hey AI, how many ears does Mr. Spock have?"*

AI: *"Next game please! Oh Christ, it's another space one. And no-one can hear me scream..." (*screams inaudibly*)*



This spaceship gets weirder the more you look at it

Love the little space convos between the characters



Fighting space enemies involves jabbing the space bar over and over. Oh the irony



"It's lonely out in space, on such a timeless flight". True dat, Elton

FEDERATION Z ***(Furillo Productions, 2020)***

Someone's outdone themselves here. This one is Spanish and a space game, like the last one was. Well, the first issue isn't a problem as I've located some English instructions. And the second issue... it looks fairly different to E.G. to me, so here's hoping...

Let's keep this short then. You've got 7 space missions to complete, doing the usual **Star Trek** things - seeking out new life, weeding out excess tribbles and hopefully living long and prospering.

*Dave: "When I say the name of this game in my head, I've been pronouncing it 'Federation Zee', and I've no idea why. Just seems to roll off the tongue better. 'Zeeeeeeeeee'. See? I didn't get particularly into this one, sorry. There were just too many of the mashing-the-fire-button ship encounters. I managed to reach one comet, at which point it told me that I didn't have any comet mining gear (doh!) I had no idea what to do next. Just as well I wasn't a **Crash** game reviewer, you'd have the programmer writing in complaining that I was a complete dolt."*

Al: "Oh lordy, more cosmic shenanigans, not sure I can take it, cap'n! Space has never felt so empty as it sometimes seems in this game. It's a bit of a drag lugging your hunk o' junk all those parsecs from one remote point to another. There are battles to amuse you in the meantime, mind. Too many really. I think their underwater follow-up had a bit more action and personality, and a lot of bad dad jokes, which is great. Oh, and I prefer to keep the Z as "zed" myself so I can then call the game 'Fed-Zed' like a big dork."

SCORING TIME!

Dave: "It's well presented and I quite liked the sound FX and some of the music. Except the music on the map screen, that was worse than lift/elevator music."

6/10

Al: "Calling occupants of interplanetary craft... give this a go if you're patient enough. Personally I'm a bit spaced out."

6.5/10



Ah, the days when O.C.G. looked like becoming the new A.C.G.s

A bold choice of colours on the load screen for this Gollop classic



Poor Jetman! His space escapades nearly always ended in a grisly death



The Long Way Home revealed an exclusive for Sir Clive's new murderous automaton



What are you going to do ?

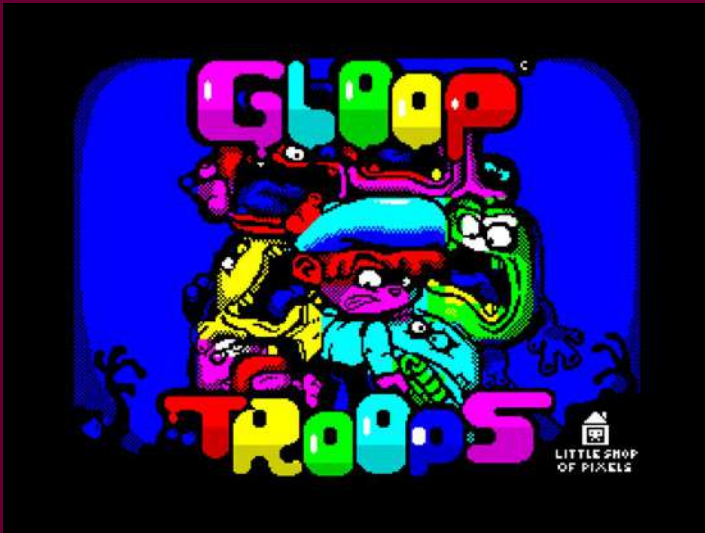
"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"Since we've already covered epic astral adventuring of a 3D nature, what other genres of spacey game have you enjoyed, eh wise guys?"*

Dave: *"Well lieutenant, reverting to 2D territory (*takes 3D glasses off*) there's the mighty **Starquake** of course - it takes genius to design a 512-screen map where every section has its own feel. Exciting and much less frustrating than the **Yesods** (my old neighbours), those spacemen who keep chasing you and grabbing your **alchiems** (ooer). Strategy-wise, **Laser Squad** and **Rebelstar**, Gollop-y good games. And of course the famous **Jetpac**, scientific proof that every alien planet you land on has its ledges in exactly the same place..."*

AI: *"Lunar **Jetman** was the most impossible game ever, everyone with a head preferred **Jetpac** instead. Personally I dug **Nodes of Yesod**, bigger and better and just generally spacetastic, baby. Adventurewise, possibly **The Long Way Home**, slow though it was due to satellite delays I expect. I was gonna say **Rigel's Revenge**, but then realised it was set in the future, not space. Duh."*

Dave: *"Yeah, to be fair AI, "the future" isn't the same as "space" is it? They're two entirely different concepts. I'll draw you a diagram. Sadly for now we're outer space."*



No lack of colour in this slightly unnerving loading screen

Collect the yellow ones and dodge the cyan ones



Some nice chunky sprites, maybe even a bit better than Bubble Bobble's (heresy)



Only the 'humble' ZX Spectrum can produce eye-blasting colours like this!



GLOOP TROOPS *(Little Shop of Pixels, 2010)*

This one is inspired by **Bubble Bobble** and even includes a sped-up rendition of that game's music. Call the lawyers! Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to collect all the stars, avoid or even gloop the bad guys, and rescue **Princess Inevitable** at the end.

Dave: *"About bleedin' time, a simple arcade game! Just as well really as I've got no inlay instructions to refer to. I've actually played this before, though it's been a while, so let's give it another go. It's immediately reminiscent of a very famous arcade game – **Operation Wolf** of course (arf). The main difference is you don't pop your enemies in bubble-form after spitting at them (eww). Not too much variety in the screen design though, and screens 15 and 18 are big difficulty spikes. In all the games I played, there was only one other screen that I lost a single life on. I lost every other life on those two. Perhaps could've done with slightly better level design, as I got a bit bored with playing back through the easy earlier ones."*

Al: *"This seems to be quite a pleasant little number, the **Bubble Bobble** inspiration clear to see and hear, although my version lacked the music for whatever reason, so I had to whistle the tune myself (sorry, neighbours). The graphics are nice and chunky and richly colourful, your dude jumps and fires his gloop (please) in a satisfying manner. It's far too easy though for a while - I reached level 21 of 30 and it's only just started getting tricky. Sorry Dave, I don't remember levels 15 and 18, can't have been that bad :p"*

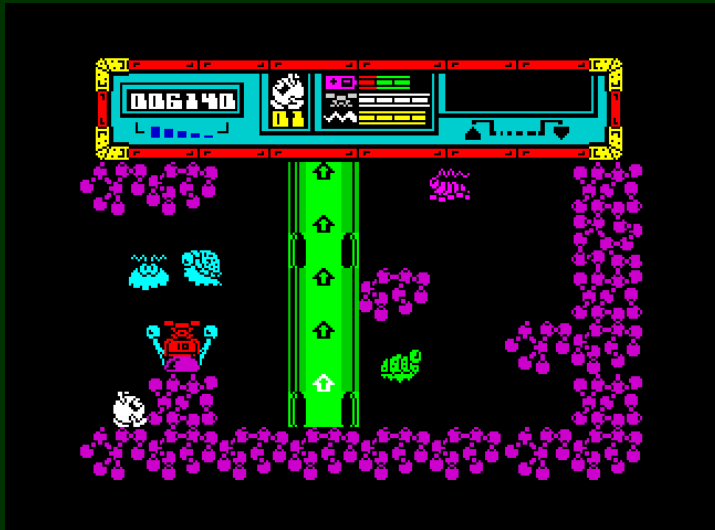
SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Overall, not bad. Okay for a gloopy bash."*

6.5/10

Al: *"Fun for a bit certainly. Top marks for presentation, the gameplay just needs a little tweaking."*

7/10



Ol' B.L.O.B. is a bit of a cutie isn't he? As are the aliens, despite being bar stewards

And this super-cute rhino-cum-hippo thing is about to gore SM's bum good style



To be honest, the game's cute but this bee is terrifying. And the kid's no better



Ah Diddums has a teddy in it. Kinda qualifies as cute-ish



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: "So what's your tippety-toppest cutesy game and character? I can't believe I just said that, I need a bourbon."

Dave: "Favourite character? I'll go with B.L.O.B. from Starquake - does that count as a cutesy game? Yes, I think it does, most things in it are cute. Sabre Wulf has the cutest sleeping hippo, possibly the cutest character in any game ever, it makes the player feel bad when you poke it repeatedly with your sabre."

"Least favourite - well, you can't go much further than that annoying egg-based idiot, Dizzy. One life and an eminently crackable shell. Yep, would gladly make an omelette out of that little s*d... Sorry, need to go away and calm down now."

Al: "Maaaaaan, you've gotta mellow that harsh anti-egg vibe and let the Dizzyman into your life, friend. I used to be like you, but now I'm a born-again Eggfan of the most annoying kind! And I don't even like eggs as such. Anyway, to answer the good lieutenant's question, it's got to be Rainbow Islands hasn't it, great game? Honourable mentions to Bubble Bobble and Rod-Land."

"Least fave? Erm, I'll say Ah Diddums, even though I've never played it and have no justification whatsoever for dissing it. As for annoyingly cute characters, is Nermal in the Garfield games? Dunno, probably."

H.E.R.O.



Returns

That is a very cool helmet, but it seems to lack an element of helicopteriness



Quick, get to that poor beaten-up miner! Monty Mole headbutted him

H.E.R.O.

RETURNS



LIFE POWER  BOMB

 SCORE: 03360 

(C)Gusivision 2020

H.E.R.O.

RETURNS



LIFE POWER  BOMB

 SCORE: 05051 

(C)Gusivision 2020

Miner Willy looks on enviously at H.E.R.O.'s headgear

H.E.R.O.

RETURNS



LIFE POWER  BOMB

 SCORE: 03431 

(C)Gusivision 2020

This screen's a bit easier than Solar Power Generator

H.E.R.O. RETURNS *(Gusmanb, 2020)*

So this is a homage to the 1984 Atari game **H.E.R.O.** (*Helicoptery Erotically Ravenous Oncologist*) which received moderate praise when it hit the Spectrum. Good old Brian Hero is jolted out of his retirement when he hears of a collapsing coal mine. Coal mine? He really must still be trapped in the '80s. He decides to dust off his unicopter hat and go rescue some doomed dudes from down t'pit.

Dave: *"First thoughts - I'm sure there are health and/or safety implications re: wearing helicopter blades on your noggin. And the dude's gun seems to have a range of about 3 inches for some reason."*

*Not sure I played the original, but this one's OK. I managed to get to level 7 - is that good? The screens seem to fluctuate wildly between very easy and bastardish. Am I allowed to say **bastard** on your site? It's what I was shouting at the screen after losing all my lives at exactly the same spot on the same screen, so yes, I think I am."*

Al: *"It's alright Dave, this site is already "too hot for Facebook" so you can have as many **bastards** as you like, ya crazy, erm, fellamylad. Anyways, remember when Activision first arrived on the Speccy scene? With some much-hyped stunningly average games, my fave being **River Raid**. **H.E.R.O.** was one such, not that I ever played it, and this homage to it seems kinda fun actually. The graphics are smaller but neater, and the gameplay is alright as you fly around rescuing miners (not kids) and avoiding fire, water and horrid insects. Trouble is, all goes well until level 5 (*sounds of Dave gloating in the background*), when you often have to adopt a **Flappy Bird** flying technique, which is quite upsetting and difficult."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Goes to show you don't need snazzy graphics to make a relatively playable game. Not bad."*

6.5/10

Al: *"Pretty decent remake of a relatively unsung game. Not quite heroic, but not far off."*

6.5/10



One of 23 Batman games Ocean made. Way to use a licence!

SuperGran takes on the might of... SuperGran?

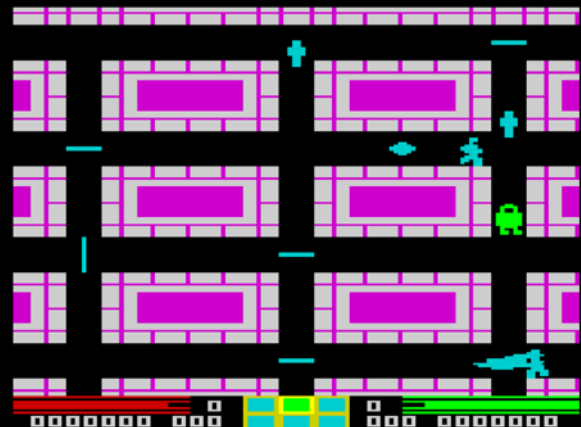


```

Special
I'm Bruce Banner, tied hand &
foot to a chair
WHAT SHALL I DO?
rock chair
I
fall & hit head!
I'm
The Incredible Hulk (Tm)
now!
<HIT ENTER>
P:
  
```

The Hulk sits down and starts singing about gold

My god, how on earth does this resemble anything to do with Superman?



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"Dog loves his superhero comics, he's always reading them. He wants me to ask ya about your best and suckiest superhero games, please gents."*

Dave: *"Dinner dinner dinner dinner Batmaaaaaan (: The Movie)" immediately springs to mind, what an ace game. I suppose we should mention the diabolically bad (supper supper supper supper) Super Gran too. Were there any Spider-Man games for the Speccy? I don't remember any. Oh, there was that Scott Adams adventure, right? Quite surprising if there were no arcade-type games."*

"Not sure I can think of any more superheroes. I'm BITING MY LIP just trying to think of one (d'you get the reference? Do you? Eh?)"

Al: *"Don't bite your lip, Dave, noooooo! Oh globbits, he's burst out of his clothes (embarrassing) and gone all big, green and muscly, rampaging around the place, wrecking the office and claiming that he told me I wouldn't like him when he's angry! And he was right! Run for your lives, earth people! He's picked up the lieutenant and is twirling him round above his head now! Ah the humanity!"*

*"I'd best spit out my last words quick: It's bizarre that Ocean ended up making 3 Batman games, and weirder still that they were all good 'uns! (*crash*) I have a soft spot for the first one, as the Dark Knight was brilliantly Adam West-like in appearance (*smash*) Redhawk also had two good, unusual outings (*splinter*) As for the naffest, I believe the Superman game was godawful, but luckily hardly anyone ever played it (*bonkaponkaponkascreeeee*) Never played any of those Marvel adventures much either. Ah phew, Dave's calmed down now and is sitting there in his tattered clothing, drinking a nice cup of tea. That was close, too close. And weird. Ouch, uh oh, now I've bitten my lip too! What's happeni..." (*snip* - "FFS, end this now!" - Ed.)*



A cute little screen this, although the driver looks like he's just lost his brakes

Go go, little magenta car! And good luck getting round the corners



I ended up getting called a 'loser'. And this game doesn't even know me!



That bloomin' yellow car's antics are proper putting me off. Say hello to the wall...



I NEED SPEED

(Computer EmuZone, 2009)

Well so do I mate, but I ain't got none, so bog off! Wait, this isn't a game about drugs? And drugs are bad, *m'kay?* This intro needs a do-over and fast. The authors of the game include **MetalBrain**, **Stargazer** and **Utopian**. Thought you'd like to know. And it's a top-down racer, the likes of which we haven't seen for millennia. It's over to Davino Turborini now on the grid for the latest news.

Dave: *"Thanks Des. Flippin' 'eck, this game is making me queasy! Is there any way I can get a full screen view? The half-screen on the right is thoroughly distracting, and I have no idea where I am on the track. The graphics are so big it feels like I've got a visibility range of about 10 yards... Oo eck, don't think I can ho... Billeeeuurghhh..!! Oh no, all over the steering wheel, sorry!"*

I suppose I should stop complaining - everything else is pretty slick, the presentation, music and the 8 billion menu options with their dancing text. And I suppose working out which way to go isn't TOO bad, as long as you don't hit any other cars. Which I did frequently."

Al: *"This one promises so much. It's got the top-down view of many a fun racing game over the years, be it 3D Stock Cars or Micro Machines. It's got stacks of options for number of players, difficulty and choice of tracks. It's even got some decent music playing throughout. So its a darn tootin' shame it's so hard to play. You tend to lose your place on the circuit frequently, and the track is too wide, which adds to the disorientation. Also having 2 different views right next to each other makes matters worse, you need the full screen really. Of course, it could just be me. And Dave."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Nicely presented game, but I don't really like it. Sorry!"*

5.5/10

Al: *"Sorry from me too, although I don't know why we're being quite so apologetic! It's just too hard and fiddly to enjoy much."*

5/10



If only the game was as ace as this screen. Still, Dave liked it

Race Fun by Rabbit. Are we quite sure about the 'fun' part?



The cracking digitised Ferretti Turbo is definitely the high point of this chequered experience

If I had my time again, I'd teleport to 1984 and bring me back a Spirit steering wheel



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"We probably all know the best racing games already (though I don't myself, being a fictional '70s American police detective), so which others, both mediocre and dire, do you recall?"*

Dave: *"Racing games eh? Ooh, well I enjoyed **Enduro Racer**, though my favourites were probably some of the slower ones like **Buggy Blast**. And **ATV Simulator** was quite entertaining, the way you have to control your man and get back on your err... **ATV**... when you fall off. Most of the **Codies** simulators (**Grand Prix**, **Jet Bike**, **BMX**) I thought were ace too."*

*"And of course, the majestic **3D Stock Car Championship**, one of the best multiplayer racers out there. Also, a shout out ("YAAAARGHH!") to one of the earliest racing games I acquired, **Race Fun** by **Rabbit Software**. Errrr, yeah, it was a bit crap. But gets a shout out anyway. Also, am I the only person to have enjoyed the **Speccy** port of **Outrun**? Probably."*

Columbo: *"That was quite interesting once you'd answered the question I'd actually asked, sir! Mr. Al, please stick to just the mediocre and the dire, unlike your distracted colleague, who I'm now going to book for wasting police time. And for shouting out too much."*

Al: *"I know, lieutenant, he gets carried away sometimes, unlike me. Right, well **Chequered Flag** was early but unexciting, what with no other cars on track. I can't share Dave's enthusiasm for **Outrun**, I'm afraid – it was so slow, I'm amazed it was such a hit. **Run Baby Run** was a reasonable budget game, getting the cop cars to tail you until they take each other out. But **Race Ace** and **F1 Simulator** were the pits (hoho), fictional ashtray steering wheel notwithstanding."*

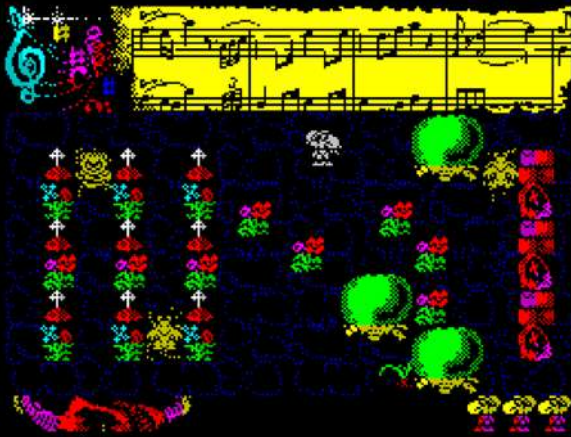


Strangling musical notes might be acceptable in Spain, but watch it, mate!

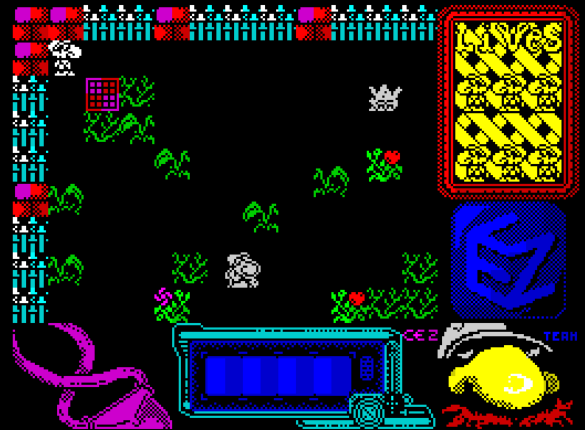
Our big-shnozzed hero takes some time to sniff the pretty flowers. Very thoroughly



Ironic that there's no in-game tune considering the sheet music at the top



This is the original Jinj, with wallpaper set to 'off' presumably



JINJ 2: BELMONTE'S REVENGE *(RetroWorks, 2012)*

There's nothing like jumping in on a sequel when you've not played or heard of the original. Makes it much more exciting. Or impossibly confusing... You got your memory back at the end of the first game (*spoiler, ah too late*). You found a scroll which was a musical score, and some mysterious characters on it. The professor (*who?*) invoked a load of demons and they ate him as thanks. That's all we have to go on.

Dave: *"How can a game be both relaxing and stressful at the same time? This collect-'em-up (is that a thing?) seems to manage it. Most of the time I'm just trundling around, until I have to navigate a tricky narrow section with a couple of nasties, and then I lose all my lives. Rinse and repeat. I'm not sure what to make of it. The wandering around is okay for a while, but there are a lot of dead ends and backtracking. Also, are you disappointed or relieved that I haven't made a single note/music related pun? I was tempted but managed to STAVE the temptation off. Guffaw."*

Al: *"MINIMAL applause for that one, dude! This game's certainly colourful enough, the graphics for the characters and scenery are not bad at all, although your white fella clashes fairly badly with the mostly blue on black background, like he's one of the Weeks. Trouble is, this game lacks two things. One is some in-game music, though we do have a menu screen tune which is well and good. The second though is the game is a bit too dull. You have to find musical notes to add to the score at the top (High score? No? OK.) but as usual it's hard to get more than a couple, and there's not much else to do."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Slick but not particularly enthralling. It's got a nice tune on the menu (would've been nice if it played throughout the game). And interesting menu option to play with the 'wallpaper' off."*

5.5/10

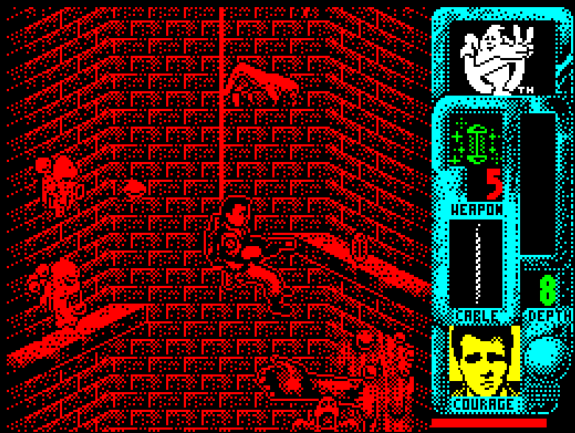
Al: *"Personally I like my wallpaper on, makes the game feel warmer. A good basis for a game, but it badly needs a little more."*

5/10



An early Crash Smash, Android II was ace. No idea what was going on though

Surely Ghostbusters II was better than the movie sequel? Sheesh...



The Target; of much criticism over the years, and with good reason



Lord of the Abstract Blocks of Colour was a surreal yet boring experience



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"Any superior sequels spring to mind, gents? And any sucky ones?"*

Dave: *"Top sequels eh? Well I reckon Target; Renegade was superior to Renegade (controversial?). Let's not mention the third and pretend that we're in an alternate reality and it was never written. Android 2 was an ace game, and a sequel where I never played the first one. Ummm... Does Horace Goes Skiing count? Arguably the best of the Horace games. As far as sucky sequels are concerned, here's an odd one - Lord Of The Rings, a bit of a disappointment after The Hobbit. The location graphics are a bit carp, and they run a lot slower for some reason. I thought Magnetron was okay but some mags disagreed."*

AI: *"So many rubbishy cash-in ones unfortunately, e.g. Renegade 3, Bomb Jack 2, Yie Ar Kung Fu 2, a million Spy vs. Spys, a trillion Boulder Dashes. Better ones? You'd have to say IK+ made a much bigger splash than the original, mostly due to growing a third combatant. Android 2 and Target; Renegade were indeed better than their originals too. Probably Ghostbusters 2 was since that wouldn't be too hard."*

Dave: *"AI, I asked you not to mention Renegade 3. Argh, there it is again!"*

AI: *"Oh yes, sorry. Well at least it was "The Final Chapter", hopefully that can bring you some closure on the matter."*



For all this game's stunning good looks, this load screen would not endear you to it...

It's like getting attacked by alien refugees from R-Type



What the heck is this pendulum thing? Something tells me it will be hurty



Get away from this cauldron, you! I said I'd mind it for that lovely Palace witchypoo



KRPAT

(Peter Macej, 1995)

Interesting story behind this game. The author wrote it between 1992 and 1994, on something called a **Didaktik M**, a Czech clone of the Spectrum. But it wasn't released commercially, despite looking the business. The highly Eastern European plot goes like this. Krpat is a peaceful devil, whose witchy woman Frndolina has been kidnapped by **Lucipher the Hell Lord**, who headlined at Bloodstock this year. Krpat must find 7 keys to unlock the gate of inferno spiral. Wow.

*Dave: "Well, what a nice looking game. Awesome graphics and animations. The game has a **Savage** vibe, but IMO it's better (cue expressions of shock). Some of the characters are remines... remenish... a bit like ones that **Joffa** might have come up with. And this was written in the early '90s on a Speccy clone, that surely deserves extra brownie points. With the sprites being mahoosive, it suffers slightly from a cramped playing area which I found made it awkward to work out where I was on the map. But it's not too bad I suppose.*

Unfortunately I didn't get very far - though the game doesn't feel unfair as you have lots of energy and can get to know the enemy movement patterns."

*Al: "Phewee, just check out the graphics on this game! They're worth the admission price alone. The sprites are enormous, which again reminds me of **Trapdoor**, but they even move pretty fast too somehow. A riot of colour greets you in this cavern of 9 levels, as you try to collect all the keys. Only downside is the gameplay, which is a tad samey, and it seems quite a challenge to make much progress."*

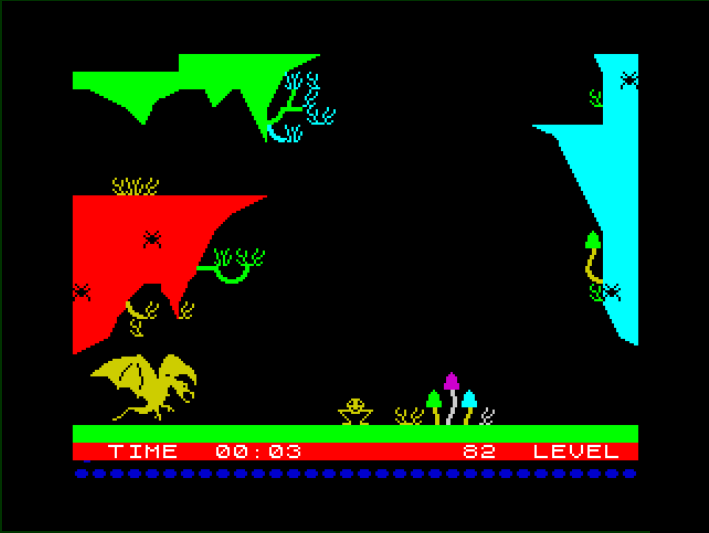
SCORING TIME!

Dave: "In the words of Lucipher, "Cha, cha, cha..!" (He says this at game over, translates to "Mwa, ha, ha!")"

7.5/10

Al: "Tricky game, a bit limited perhaps, but man, those graphics! Sometimes they're enough on their own."

8/10



Amazing to think you can complete this game in seconds if you only know how

Sir Fred gets the gal. Hang on, bit of a spoiler, no? He never got her when I played it...



I'm not sure Sabrina would win a bounce-off with that large lady in front of her



The fun you can have when you've got a ginormous swede



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"Being American, I think all youse Europeaners are much the same, but tell me, do you have any fave wacky foreign games?"*

Al: *"Outrageous, lieutenant, I blame your lot for U.S. Gold! Maybe these aren't that wacky, but Bugaboo (The Flea) and Sir Fred from Spain were quite unique in their way. I have to mention the Sabrina game too, for 2 obvious reasons (graphics and gameplay of course, don't know what you were thinking.)"*

Dave: *"Every crazy wacky game I can think of for the Speccy was of British origin! Though I think the hands-down winner has to go to a modern-ish game, written for the 'Crap Games Competition'."*

"I'm counting it because the game really isn't crap, but it's ridiculous... It's by the Mojon Twins and it's called (deep breath)... 'He Had Such A Big Head That If He Were A Cat He Would Have To Toss The Mice From Under The Bed With A Brow.'"

"The game is as bonkers as the title. Your huge head keeps getting stuck on stuff, it's quite distressing."

Al: *"That's why I've got you onboard amigo, for gems like that!"*



Thought I'd include the cover for a bit of variety

Preparing to enter darkest Birkenhead

```
You are entering the land of the
dead. A place which knows no
light and the days are as black
as the nights. But you are a
strong and brave warrior, and
with your sword ready at your
side, you venture forth, to gain
a hero's glory, and to rid the
land of its evil.
```

al

STRENGTH 70

CONQUESTS 0

Bird Man

STRENGTH 0

SKILL RANGE 6

The bird man falls from the sky
and lands dead by your feet.

al

STRENGTH 38

CONQUESTS 7

In your face, Bird Man!

*Village Man sees fit to send us on
an aimless sub-quest. These
people...*

Village Man

STRENGTH 5

SKILL RANGE 4

I cannot attempt to fight it.
Please try...He lives in the old

al

STRENGTH 44

CONQUESTS 6

LAND OF THE DEAD *(Steve Westwood, 2012)*

Spectrum Computing tells us that the author programmed this by himself, for himself, in Basic in 1993. I just typed 1893 then and laughed a little. Truly this man was ahead of his time. It looks like a computerised version of the classic *Fighting Fantasy* books we all knew and loved. Being '80s geeks. But would this game allow cheating quite so easily, I wonder? Over to Dungeon Master Davegard.

Dave: *"Ooh, 'bout time we had a nice dungeon crawl/hack. Used to quite enjoy this sort of thing back in the time that I call the 'Zed-to-Spec' transition era ('82/'83). Wha? It was written in 1993? OK then, let's check it out. "With a fud - the bear falls dead"... This is weird... Have I picked the wrong game with the same title?? Well I suppose it's a game... of sorts. It's quite difficult, you really need to know when to run or attack (bit like real life eh, readers?) Sod it, I'm going to **BREAK** into the game, don't you try to stop me!"*

"Oh - I thought there was going to be an end, but it looks like a high score thing, 'glory points' or something dodgy. Some bits (and typos) are quite entertaining. I wanted to see some of the descriptions of the actions, the consequences of said actions, and the bizarre ways the monsters attack you (zombie whacking you about the head with a staff, anyone?)"

Al: *"That's hacking, that is, 'Disassembly Dave' – I'm reporting you to the lieutenant straight away, whiney tattletale that I am!! Anyway, this game is so simple, written in Basic and in white on black. You either continue your journey, talk to someone or fight them, that's it. And to fight, you pick a random number and hope for the best. This game makes me wish someone had tried to properly reproduce those *FF* books on the Speccy, the only shame here is this is a very simplified version. I had a couple of goes which took 15 minutes each, winning quite a few battles but ultimately not quite reaching my goal."*

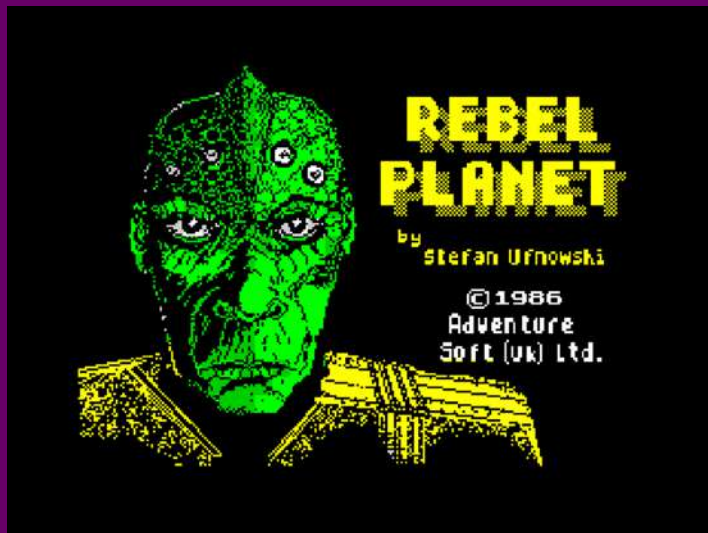
SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"The game wasn't designed for public consumption, but it's not a bad distraction."*

5/10

Al: *"Nice idea, rather too simple to have much lasting playability."*

5/10



This was one of those 'looks great but plays bad' adventures

And so was this one. Adventure International, that's what they were called, I remember now!

© Steve Jackson Ian Livingstone



They did a few of these actually, have to play them some time



While this was an arcade game by Virgin with no connection whatsoever to the FF books of the same name. Nice pic though eh?



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"Hacking eh? I had a cough like that once, the doc said lay off the cigars. Anyway, what are the best **Fighting Fantasy** books, gents?"*

Al: *"I think probably **Harlot Of Miretop Fountain** or **Highland Of The Blizzard Ring**, from what little I can remember. Though my memory has been refreshed slightly thanks to the excellent and hilarious **Turn To 400** website. **Starship Traveller** and **Freeway Fighter** were relatively novel novels in their own way but they weren't quite the same somehow."*

Dave: *"FF books, eh - they're great, right? There are few I didn't like. I think (controversially) **Warlock** is my least favourite just because of that s0dding maze and the fact it's so easy to get to the end, yet miss the exact keys you need. **Starship Traveller** was a nice idea but like you, I found it a bit bizarre. I particularly liked **Lizard King** (now with extra dinosaurs!) for being completable even if you miss out on the odd item, and **Scorpion Swamp** as the choice of 'patrons' gives it some replay value (the evil 'Grimslade' route is a great alternative to being a goody two-shoes all the time). **House Of Hell** was quite a fun horror one, though I later discovered that if you roll a FEAR score that's too low at the start of the book, you can't actually complete it (harsh)."*

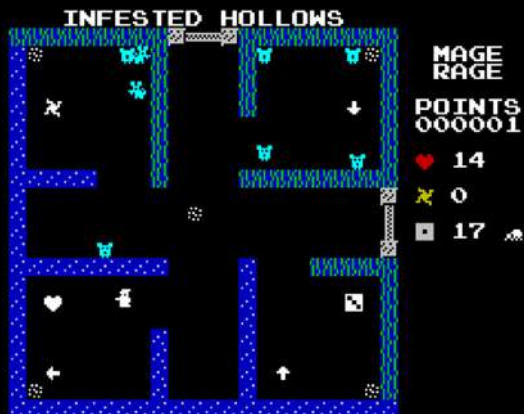
*"Later on, **Appointment with F.E.A.R.** was an ace take on the comic book world, that saw you battling criminals with superpowers. My favourites were probably the **Sorcery!** series - it felt like an epic journey with four books in the collection, and the accompanying spellbook was pretty inspired. Not a chance in hell of completing the whole thing, but it didn't matter to young Dave! I've yet to play some of the later ones. Now where did I put my dice..."*

Al: *"Don't rate 'em then eh, Dave? :D"*



Love this cartoony loading screen, it's too cute/grotesque

Mercure finds himself stuck between a rock and a cursed place



Unless I'm very much mistaken, these hollows appear to be infested

At least it's not the goblins' dungeon



MAGE RAGE (Joesoft, 2019)

Seriously, how have I never played **Halls Of The Things**? That's almost as criminal as never playing **Elite**. Outrageous. As Mercure the mage you must recover some magical swirls (*eh?*) which were stolen that morning from Stone Circle while you were meditating. Pretty sloppy. Negotiate the creatures and traps within a creepy lair, then escape on your trusty steed.

Dave: *"Ah - an AGD Mini game I do believe? I think I prefer the 'mini' ones, you don't need big flash graphics to impress Mr. Dave, let me tell you that! Well, it seems to be easy to pick up, and some nice tunes play throughout. I thought my fire key was broken at first till I figured out you started out weaponless. Gandalf wouldn't have been this unprepared, no siree bob. Hmmm, avoiding the nasties is quite difficult. Glad to see your life/lives fully restored when you pick up a heart, rather than just incremented by one, as it's hard to avoid losing a bunch on any screen, especially when you run out of ammo. Is it amm? Maybe it's offensive spells, like ZAP and HOT (5 points if you get that reference, readers)."*

"I admit I gave up on my second encounter of that maze-like section that just keeps sending you back to the same screen. Oh flip, I've just sneaked a peek at the map and there are quite a few of those sections. Maybe they should've called it 'Maze Rage'... "You are in a twisty maze of passages, all different"... "Al, help...! I'm regressing to my early text adventure days...!" "Xyzy!" "Plugh!"..."

Al: *"Get a hold of yourself, sir – sit down and we'll sing about gold. Hey, this game is fun! I can only assume it's a lot like H.O.T.T. but even so, this is a new one on me. You have to find your 20 shurikens, aka magic swirls, shoot monsters with ammo you come across, find health top-ups, and trigger exits to your room by walking over various arrows. The graphics are teeny but it doesn't matter, and the pace is fast and frantic."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Not a bad game, but does anyone like a maze in a computer game?"*

6/10

Al: *"From the massive graphics of Krpat to this game's tiny ones. There's a place in the world for both."*

7/10



*The bit where your eyes fall out
and you crash your ship*

*It's rude to creep up on a guy
when he's taking a squat,
donchaknow?*



*Bubble Bobble + Mountains of
Ket = Pang*



*I'll bet Bomb Jack sold really well
in ancient Egypt*



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"So gents, what's your fave super-ancient arcade title, and its best Speccy conversion?"*

AI: *"I'll go for **Scramble**, loved the sit-down table they used to have for it, it appealed to my laziness! I'd say **Cavern Fighter** is probably the best Speccy convo, they got pretty much everything right really apart from the offensively flashy city."*

Dave: *"Well I didn't really play that many super-old video games. **OutRun** with the sit-in cabinet was one that got my jaw dropping (thunk) at the time but it was so flamin' expensive for a youngling to play. **Renegade** was a good conversion from the arcade from what I remember, though I never properly played the original. Talking of beat 'em ups, I think I'm one of the few people who actually enjoyed **Kung Fu Master** on the Speccy. Most people seem to think it's a bit carp."*

*"**Pang** was possibly my favourite arcade game - the Speccy version is decent but the collision detection isn't quite on point. So... All time fave? Errr... let's go for **Bomb Jack**, an ace game all round."*

AI: *"Pong?"*

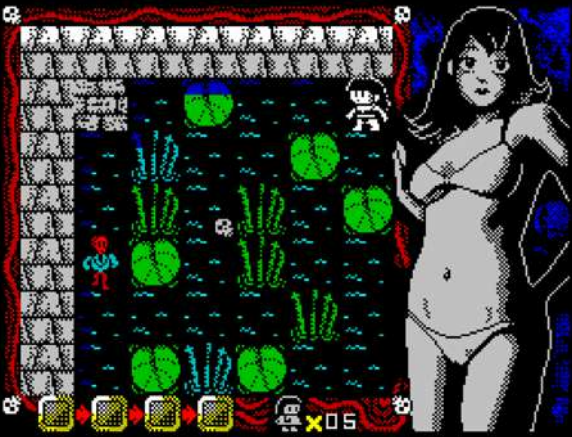
Dave: *"Pang."*

AI: *"Hang on, I think that's the doorbell."*



Relatively arty for a Mojons loading screen

Nanako, meet Mr. Skeleton. Mr. Skeleton, meet Nanako



Nanako's going for the wet look while leaping those lily pads

Yeah, the sprite doesn't really match the colossal woman on the right, does it?



NANAKO DESCENDS TO HELL

(Ubhres, 2009)

This is another **Mojon Twins** game in disguise, and boy do those guys like the ladies! I've got quite a few of their risqué loading screens on display in my emulator's game collection, which has inadvertently raised its rating from U to 18... Anyway Nanako has escaped from a scary castle in her first adventure, only to find her home village destroyed. The local Oracle, named **Ceefax**, tells her "Go to Hell", which seems rude, but is actually helpful, as there she can find four bits of ancient artefact to help her smite any enemy.

Dave: *"I did like the little intro cartoon, but I have to ask, what on earth's happened to the Oracle's head? I wasn't sure if it's an **CENSORED** or maybe a pair of **CENSORED**. Anyhoos, it looks like we've got a collect-'em-up of sorts then, with a few objects needed to pass certain obstacles. Our bikini-clad heroine runs about the screens pretty quickly, but there doesn't seem to be much space to avoid things. Feels quite claustrophobic. I found it easier to just exit and re-enter a screen hoping that the nasty person wouldn't be there anymore. Though occasionally I'd lose a life straight away after entering a screen."*

Al: *"This game looks and sounds good to begin with, nice in-game tune and pretty big chunky graphics. The trouble is they don't move at all well, the baddies being particularly poor, in that they aren't really animated at all, they just zap round in character squares. As time went on, I began to get into it a bit more though, chopping trees with axes and cutting gates with scissors (?), so it ain't bad for a bit I guess. If you're not thoroughly distracted by the **Giant Bikini'ed Woman** on the right of the screen."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Nicely presented as you'd expect from the Mojons, and a cool tune, but I didn't really like it - it's just too hard to avoid the nasties."*

5.5/10

Al: *"With a bit more polish this could have been a winner. As it is, it's a bit skimpy, like the eponymous heroine's outfit."*

6.5/10

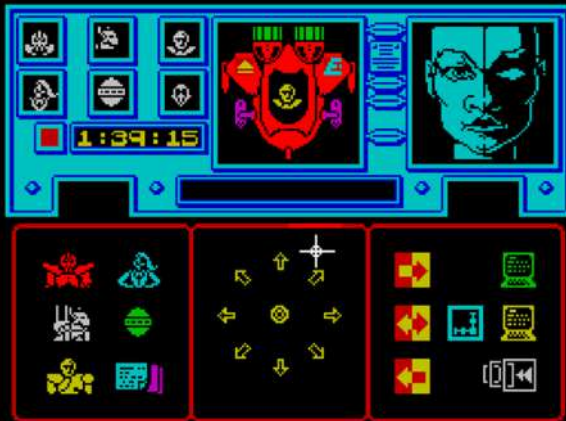


A magenta Maria fends off a fan's advances with her sword

*Go on Thyra, you can do it!
Player 2 has nipped off for a pee*



*Shadowfire looked amazing, but
to date nobody has figured out
how to play it*



*La Mopp is the badass beeyatch
of the bunch when it comes to
Speccy lady heroes*



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: "Who was the best dame, sorry, heroine in a Speccy game... bearing in mind there weren't many in those days?"

Al: "How about Fred, female and professional on the cover, male and ugly in the game? I've never understood that one. And Mrs. Mopp was very... efficient. The only other one I can think of is Vixen, who could whip it, whip it real good!"

Dave: "Well, after considering, as one does, the bikini-clad heroines in slightly less interesting games (Vixen, Athena etc.) I'll pick Maria Whittaker (aka 'Princess Mariana') in Barbarian II as I enjoyed that game quite a lot. But I'll give the award (there is one, right?) to Thyra the Valkyrie (Gauntlet) for being the game's best character, with a perfect balance of weapons and magic. A shout out to Sevrina Maris from Shadowfire who was pretty badass, though I never got far in that game. And of course, the unnamed girl heroine in Ant Attack. And before you ask, no, Mrs. Mopp isn't going to feature."

Al: "Mrs. Mopp was programmed by a laaaaaady, y'know, so it's not as sexist as one might think."

Dave: "I know, I met her son once. He said his mum really cleaned up with that game. Ouch, stop hitting me!"

On Reflection
OU REFLECTOU



Des res, 12 rooms, nice front garden, strange writing in the sky

Watership Down: the deleted scenes

The rabbit rebounds from the fog as though it has been kicked by an unseen assailant. There is an audible 'crack', and blood and tissue flies in all directions in a horrific arc of gore. You stop dead in your tracks. Sparks fly, and a terrible smell of burning fur fills your nostrils almost immediately. The rabbit hits the gravel of the driveway and twitches. It is horribly burned and stone dead.

Your jaw drops. Your mind spins. The fog killed the rabbit. Why wouldn't it do the same to you? You are trapped here.

Any Key

You stand in a large circle of gravel which is the top of Johnstone Manor's long driveway. The main entrance to the Manor is directly to your North, a huge ancient looking oak door surrounded by a four-pillared stone porch providing the main focal point. A rather rickety looking wooden garage stands in the distance to the East, and the entrance to the gardens is West of here. Strangely, the rest of the drive and the gates you entered the grounds by appear to have been obscured by a strange, luminous fog.

What next?

→■

Nice idea to colour key words, think I'll nick that

"Unlock door with key"? Classic adventure move, it never fails

The oak door stands at least twelve feet tall and is securely locked. Ringing the bell brings no response. But you'll have to get in somehow!

What now?

→UNLOCK DOOR WITH KEY

You insert the iron key into the large lock. It fits perfectly and turns surprisingly easily. You turn the handle and the door swings open, the elderly hinges creaking and complaining with every centimetre that the door travels. Nobody comes to greet you.

What now?

→ZX SPECTRUM - IT LIVES, BABY■

ON REFLECTION *(Cheese Freak, 2007)*

Author **Lee Tonks** advises that this game is one of those 'interactive fiction' thingies, which usually means 'pretty darn short adventure'. In my experience, there's short and there's short. Fingers crossed it lasts longer than it takes for the kettle to boil. You're a reporter on your way to visit your boffin buddy for an exclusive on his whacky new invention, when an explosion hits your car. Lo and behold, you find yourself trapped between reality and the shadow world (*the Upside Down perhaps?*) You must escape!

Dave: *"Now I do like a text adventure that's been designed by someone who wants their players to actually finish their game. It's a shame we didn't get many of these back in the '80s! This one's got a nice plot and I liked the dual-reality style puzzle mechanics as well, where you can do things in one time that affects the other. Reminded me a bit of Day Of The Tentacle. But with less comedy. And fewer tentacles. It's easy to play, no real issues with vocab, no need for a map, reasonable puzzles that are all solvable with a bit of thought, and the game is fairly easy to finish."*

Al: *"So this seems like a bit of a supernatural affair then, which sounds intriguing. The bad news is it starts with one of those horrible vocabulary guessing games, a la Rigel's Revenge or The Hulk. I had to look up the solution in the end after much frustration. But after this bad start, what follows seems to be quite an enjoyable, descriptive adventure which delivers something different to the usual goblins and dungeons. I may well come back to this one after we've gotten past Z..."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"This one's pretty cool and ticks all the boxes. Well done Mr. Tonks!"*

9/10

Al: *"On Reflection, this seems like a highly decent text adventure."*

7.5/10



Probably the cyanest screen in The Hobbit

'Timelords' might have gotten Level 9 sued, so they went with 'Lords of Time'

```

N
You are at the end of the
north walkway. If you continue
it will be on foot.
Exits are north and south.
What now?
N
You are standing on a floating
metal platform, suspended in
mid-air. To the north is a
starship.
Exits are north (through a
door) and south.
What now?
N
You bump into a door
What now?
OPEN DOOR
"YOU'RE NOT AUTHORISED TO DO
THAT!"
What now?
■

```



I can hear that crazed organ theme tune blaring away

Dave managed to finish Mindshadow. Well done Dave!



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: "Simple question fellas. **On Reflection**, what was the best traditional style **Spectrum** adventure?"

Dave: "Having 'reflected', in this day and age, I reckon most of the famous ones seem unnecessarily bad to play. Yes, I'm talking about the **Artic Adventures** (urgh), the **Scott Adams** ones like **Gremlins** (nice graphics but not a great parser), and even **The Hobbit** (is it sacrilege to say that?) My favourite of the '80s lot is definitely **Lords Of Time**. It was the first one I played with decent puzzles, and a clever idea where you have different time slots you can visit. I was also pleasantly surprised by **Mindshadow** - that one was proper decent, had a nice story, can be solved and gives you a good amount of descriptive text. Though maybe it was just the thought of being stranded on an idyllic desert island..."

Al: "For me lieutenant, it's easy, despite my learned colleague's reservations. **The Hobbit** every day of the week. I loved it. Trouble is, it spoiled me for all other adventures. Damn you, **Melbourne House**! My esteemed co-reviewer's own series of **Quilled** games about our school days, called **Skool Rools** (sadly lost in the sands of time) were rather good though, even though my character was murdered in one of them."

Dave: "So you should be for going on about **The Hobbit** so much!"



Send your small child parachuting today!

Bit close for comfort on level 4 here



And good luck landing on your base on level 1. The avian traffic's terrible out there today

Odds of a major helicopter disaster are high on level 9



PARACHUTE

(Miguetelo, 2018)

Ah this looks like a nice straightforward game. It's a remake of an old Atari game apparently. Hope it's not **E.T.** Written by **Miguetelo** and released over here by **Bumfun** (*Jeez, not them again, change your name, will ya?*) Your mission is simple - land on the ground in one piece. You can descend faster by burning fuel, since your 'chute is a fancy one, just try to avoid birdstrike and other obstacles. Sounds a doddle.

Dave: *"Do you remember the episode of that show, I forget what it's called now, where the murderer was a clever pilot/parachutist who tried to make the murder look like an accidental plane crash? Johnny Cash was in it... gah, can't remember its name at all..."*

"Anyway, onto the game. Who'd have thought there'd be so many hazards for a simple parachute drop? Though I also wonder how many people actually utter the word 'Ouch' when their parachute fails and they plummet to the ground. I had a look at the Atari version this game is loosely based on - cripes, my poor lug 'oles, what a tune! Fortunately, the Speccy version has some banging music to accompany your plummeting. A couple of nice design touches in this one - it's good that you can move your parachutist upwards, otherwise it'd be rock 'ard. And I'm thankful that the rising balloons stop when you get near the bottom of the screen - avoids some very unfair potential deaths."

AI: *"Nice simple game, this. Or simple at least until you get stuck fast on level 9 (appropriately) like wot I have. It's quite the strategic dilemma when to use your limited boost and when to freefall in safety, but as the levels go by, breathing space becomes harder to find. There's great varied music which makes a world of difference too."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Simple but playable. I managed to get to level 21, but things were just a bit too tight on the screen, and I had to admit defeat."*

7/10

AI: *"A simple idea very well executed. Hang on, level 21? Gulp..."*

7.5/10



Watch out, Android 2 is hiding behind one of those trees

and Thrust, and Thrust, and... crash



Not a clue what's going on in ATF Sim, but it sure is fun to fly about willy-nilly

People have started building houses in that Star Wars trench. The robo-residents ain't friendly



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"A parachute is one way to fly... kinda. But what were the best Speccy games in which you flew?"*

Dave: *"Crikey, this might need narrowing down a bit! Well if you consider shmups there were a gazillion for the Speccy. A game I've mentioned before is **Elite**, the best fly-y game I've played. Followed by the best Speccy scramble game, **Penetrator** (stop sniggering). And my bronze medal goes to **T.L.L.**, a jolly good fun arcade game involving a plane. I preferred it over the slightly sluggish **Cyclone**. Close 4th place goes to **Thrust**, one of the few games where battling with the controls is somehow more fun than frustrating."*

Al: *"Flight sims bored the pants off me, but I enjoyed **ATF**. If we're talking helicopters, **Krakatoa** was quite fun, rescuing those poor lava-covered saps. And flying in space? Let's go obscure and pick **Buggy Blast**, for its trench-travelling tension."*

Dave: *"I still can't remember the name of that TV show, it's annoying me now."*

Columbo: *"Nah, I've got no idea guys. Maybe **Perry Mason**, I dunno."*

Dave: *"Phew, I guess that leaves the fourth wall thankfully intact."*

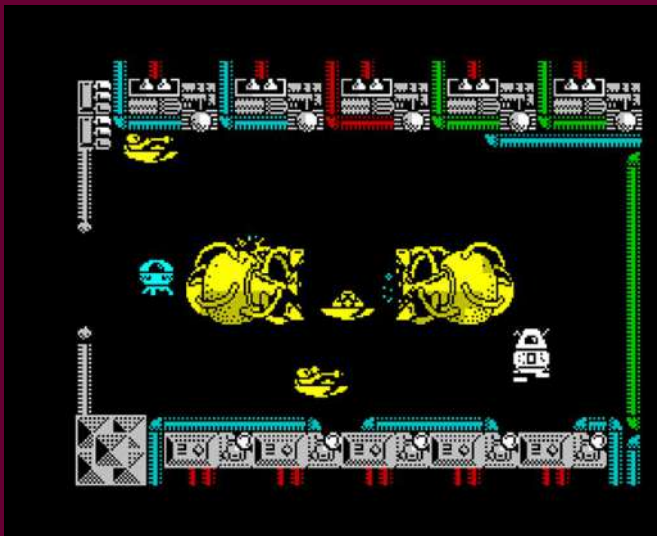
Al: *"Whatcha talking about? Lieutenant, I think we need a brief rest from your relentless questioning, things are starting to get weird."*

Columbo: *"Okay schmucks, I'll let you take a load off for now. I've only got ten more of my questions to ask ya. My boss insists that I ask all suspects exactly **26 questions**, I've no idea why. He's an odd one, I know that much. Come on **Dog**, let's let you go do your business then we'll resume in ten."*



"You ain't going anywhere near my flowers, you robo-ba\$tar\$..."

Too many yellows on this screen. Our robot acts yellow and runs off



Alien 0 stops to admire the nice sprites

"Sometimes it's hard to be... a robot."



QUADRON

(Andrew Beale, 2018)

In all honesty this was the only modern era game I could find that begins with Q. **Quazatron**'s a bit old in the tooth innit? This game was started back in '88 but never got released. You, as an ickle wobot, have to defend your base from aliens wot are marauding, like always. You can use power-ups and high tech weapons as you scuttle round the base. **Get scuttling, Dave.**

Dave: *"Pew, pew pew...! This is a slick little shooter, the smooth movement of your bot has the slickness and feel of an early **Ultimate** title. At first I was trying to figure out what I had to do, but it seems basically - well, err... shoot everything? It's quite good fun for a while, but it seems to go from easy to insanely hard pretty fast. As soon as I got swarmed I was dying pretty quickly. Probably didn't help that I was bouncing all over the place."*

AI: *"This is like a megamix (do people still say that? No, okay) of various **Ultimate** classics, since you've got an **Alien 8** type robot moving round a slightly **Sabre Wulfy** environment, and when fighting off aliens it feels like 'spraying the bugs' in **Pssst**. The sound is pretty **Ultimatey** too, but if you're going to copy, you might as well copy from the best. As for the game, dumb me doesn't quite get it. You're defending the crystals but you've got some of your own to fire too, to no obvious benefit. I've read the instructions but am still at a loss."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Quite a fun shooter, seems to be nicely programmed, though it didn't hold my interest for very long."*

6.5/10

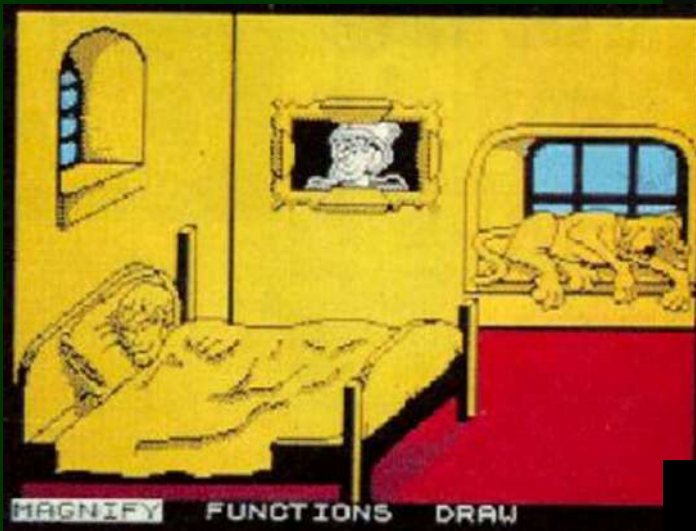
AI: *"Looks the biz, but I'm not quite on board with it."*

6.5/10



With apologies to retinas everywhere

Hmm... don't think this is a Speccy screenshot. And sadly it's quite good



Did they seriously think they'd be able to animate this on a Speccy?!

Ah look, it did come out after all...



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"Quadron never saw a release back in the '80s. But which other unreleased games interested you the most?"*

AI: *"Beaver Bob in Dam Trouble, since I designed that winning loading screen! That's a total lie of course, but I bet the guy who did was well gutted. Only ironically his work is more famous now since it didn't get released. And maybe the Judge Death game which Piranha were planning before they folded, since I'm well into my 2000 A.D. stuff these days."*

Dave: *"Ooh, well the (absent) daddy of them all has to be Mire Mare, right? Its non-release spawned all sorts of gossip and (probably unfounded) rumours that the game actually existed. Good luck getting a screenshot of that for your website AI, ho ho... I don't know if it counts, but Scooby Doo also springs to mind. I know the game was 'technically' released, but let's face it - it was a completely different game from the magazine-featured exciting arcade adventure with big graphics. So I'm gonna count it as a separate unreleased game."*

"The last one that I would've liked to see is the infamous Star Trek. I think Mike Singleton would've probably done a decent job given his past record, as he was a Speccy god. "...Spoooooock...."

AI: *"Yep, got a pic of Mire Mare, Dave. I'm sure it's here somewhere (*rustle rustle*)"*

Dave: *"Hmmm. If you did have a shot of the 'real' game, the Stamper Mafia would be round to 'disappear' you, I think. AI? AI? Uh oh..."*



Knurly, dude!

And we're off! Doesn't look too hard so far



Roger's Tour is starting to resemble a bad Trip on this level



Roger gets airborne at a particularly unwise moment



ROGER THE PANGOLIN *(Stonechat Productions, 2020)*

This was a giveaway on **WOOT's** ZXmas 2020 edition. Without being disrespectful, I'm still not sure what that means entirely, but I'd guess it's a modern day 16/48 magazine type thing. Groovy. Our pal Son... I mean **Roger the Pangolin** (*not hedgehog*) is participating in the **2020 Knurled Tour**, consisting of 12 tracks, all handily unlocked. So jump and boost your way to Pangolinian greatness.

Dave: *"Apparently pangolins don't have teeth. Did you know that AI? This fact was brought to you despite having no real importance in relation to the game itself. So let's move on. First thing I have to say is... It's flippin' fast..! Rolling seems to be a very efficient method of movement for our scaly friend. It looks incredible, the speed of scrolling and all multicolour to boot. For me it's probably a bit too fast though. Or perhaps the level design could've done with a bit more actual 'track' than 'nothingness'. I kept falling off every couple of seconds, and it seemed completely random whether I finished a level or not. Then again, perhaps it's just my cr*p reactions as I slowly trundle through middle age. "My eyes are poor, my nose is knackered etc."*

AI: *"Ha, if you don't have a migraine after playing this game, you're clearly not trying! It's a bit of a miracle to get a quasi **Sonic** game running on the Speccy, colours and all, so hat's off to the programmers. It plays pretty well, and flies along at quite a pace when you're not falling off the track all the time. There are quite a few courses, but I think locking them until you've completed the current one would add more of a competitive element. It's a bit too generous as it is."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Fast and furious, just like a pangolin. Probably."*

7/10

AI: *"A great technical achievement, and a fun game to boot."*

7.5/10



Where it all began for Monty. Actual headline-making satire back in '84

Dave can be heard laughing maniacally at this point



Let's make a Gauntlet game! But with frogs!



*Nothing like a big finish to a section. And that's nothing like... (*zzzzipppp*)*



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: "Who was king of the Spectrum jungle? Or icy tundra? Or farm? Which **ZX** animal was the best, is what I mean?"

Dave: "First things first... No mention of kangaroos! You know EXACTLY who or what I'm referring to, right? I guess a certain mole has to be right up there (where exactly?). One called Monty. Interestingly, he turned into a stoat in a later game, I think. The Monty games could be all-time classics if it weren't for those pesky randomized crushers. How about a dragon? Am I allowed one? In the form of **Thanatos**! Being able to burn everything alive and drop knights to their death is heaps of fun. Buuurrrnnn...! Hahahaha!!!"

"Nope, the outright winner is going to be... (drum roll)... a frog! Yes, I'm talking **Ranarama**. A magical arcade adventure from the mighty **Steve Turner**. I mean, even the mini-game where you have to rearrange the letters of 'Ranarama' sounds dull but is actually pretty exciting. Yep, that's the winner in my book."

AI: "Monty Mole had a fair few outings, with mostly impressive results. I think you might be thinking of **Sam Stoat** there, Dave... or **Percy Pigeon** at a push. Does Zippy from **Splat!** count? No? Alright, howzabout **Psycho Pigs UXB**, for the bizarre title if nothing else? Domestically speaking, you could pick **Garfield** or either Fido from **Don't Buy This!** Think someone needs to draw up a big ol' Spectrum Zoo map including all the characters. Someone who's not me, that is."



Pretty kerrazy loading screen...

Our knight sets off on his noble quest, livin' la 'vida' loca



Los skeletons sap your estamina big-time

Our guy looks like a tin can, it's amazing anyone can hurt him



SOULS REMASTER ***(RetroBytes, 2013)***

A game inspired by **Dark Souls** sounds a bit terrifying to me. *Souls* + Spectrum Hard = 'Nope' in my book. Let's hope it's not as bad as all that. Dave probably doesn't care, 'cos he completed **Bloodborne**, the big fancy pants. Your task is simply to find the big bad boss beastie of the piece and destroy it. You can use magic once you've found a sorcerer, and gathering souls will raise your level nicely. So have at it, good sir knight.

Dave: *"YOU DIED"... I enjoy a good Soulslike. Nice to see a Speccy version of this sort of game. Some nice colourful chunky graphics on this one, and I like the way the dude stomps around the place. Unfortunately, I'm not convinced the gameplay really works for me. Dying is typical in this type of game, but so are slick and responsive combat controls, and the ability to learn enemy attack patterns. Combat in this one feels very clunky and unresponsive, and attack patterns feel random (they might not be, but I couldn't figure them out). Overall it makes it more frustrating than challenging. I gave up after around the tenth time I got plonked back at my last checkpoint."*

Al: *"Oh, this is a good 'un! It may not look like much at first sight, but it's a clever little number, borrowing ideas from Souls type games, and cunningly Spectrumising them good style. You build up your level by vanquishing foes and claiming their souls, then if you die you have to return to the screen you died on to get them back. It's ace to play so far and I haven't even found the sorcerer yet, so magic I ain't. The only downsides are somewhat basic combat and no funkeh choons."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Nicely presented and good to see a few nods to Soulslike gameplay elements (shortcuts, retrieving your souls etc.) but I'm afraid the gameplay isn't up to scratch for me..."*

6/10

Al: *"A cracking new meets old adventure, with plenty of soul(s)."*

8.5/10



Bloodborne on the Spectrum looks sweeeeeet

And Nioh looks pretty decent too



Quite how they've done Code Vein without any colour clash baffles me

Demon Souls looks.... hey, wait a minute... these ARE Speccy games aren't they?!



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"Gents, your feelings about Souls type games please? Any success with them?"*

AI: *"Personally I struggle with them, and never seem to have the required patience to get anywhere with them. I tend to flit from game to game, you see, as Dave can attest. I've tried Bloodborne and Mortal Shell and got virtually nowhere in either. Feeble I know."*

Dave: *"Well, unlike some, I've shown some patience and enjoyed ("and completed" – come on Dave, don't be coy!" – AI) some ace ones over the last few years (Bloodborne, Nioh, Nioh 2, Code Vein). Funnily enough I've never played Dark Souls or Demon Souls. Go figure."*

AI: *"I will Dave. I'm figuring now that my high rating for this game might be mostly because I'm easily pleased for half an hour, and rarely venture further than that into some games.... hmmm."*



I went to Finland once and it was exactly like this

Screen 1 and it's time for Toofy to start grabbing his nuts (sorry, no excuse)



This screen's got more fans than Ikea. Do they have fans? Could be

Bet you never reached this level of Cybernoid



TOOFY IN FANLAND *(Paul Jenkinson, 2012)*

The Spectrum Show's a bit good, isn't it? **Paul Jenkinson** has been doing them for ages now and is still going strong, even if he's running out of reliable hardware to test, and he reviews his own games. Here's one now. **T.I.F.** is the first of 3 **Toofy** games he's done, and in short your mission is to take back your 40 stolen nuts, scattered around Fanland. The fans blow you around, so try not to be a lightweight or you're doomed.

Dave: *"The simplest games are often the best ones, right? This is a nice use of **A.G.D.**, Paul J definitely knows how to create a simple playable Speccy game. This one's got a pick up 'n' play feel to it, no instructions needed. Fortunately there's only nasties to avoid in the early screens, but I quickly lost everything (including my lives and marbles) as soon as there were two things bouncing around the screen... My poor ageing reactions just couldn't keep up. Definitely got a **Manic Miner** feel to it, in that once you figure out a screen you can often do it without further trouble. There are a couple of early difficulty spikes (I had REAL trouble with screen 3) but I don't really mind having screens that aren't too challenging later in the game."*

Al: *"I've set myself a half hour minimum time limit to play these 26 games, and that's generally long enough to get a good idea of how the land lies. This game seemed relatively straightforward, so I thought 30 minutes would be ample, but an hour later I've just finished it (Saving states? Of course) and very good it was too! So well played **P.J.**"*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"What more can I say - nice simple game, very playable. Also possibly one of Paul J's more difficult games, as I could only get about halfway through the screens."*

7.5/10

Al: *"Maddeningly addictive, clever puzzler. I'm a big FAN!"*

7/10



I can just imagine PJ sitting there waiting, all excited, like a kid at Xmas

I can just imagine Geoff sitting there waiting, all excited, like a kid at Xmas



This is how we produced our business docs in the olden times, kids



I couldn't find any screenshots of a type-in, so Cassette 50 will have to do



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"What's your fave parts of The Spectrum Show, fellas? Any observations generally?"*

AI: *"It's amazing how Paul has produced so many shows over the years, and it's still essential viewing for Spectrum Heads. His dedication to reviewing practically every hardware item is incredible (and expensive!) But rest assured, when he finally runs out of other things to talk about, there'll still be stacks of games out there to review."*

"My fave bits are games reviews and uber-geeky chats with Geoff! My least fave things are too much Jetpac from Paul, and too much Lords of Midnight from Geoff, but it's still aces."

Dave: *"Ooh yeah, great show. In fact, some people might accuse you of blatantly nicking the conversational chat idea from Paul/Geoff off T.S.S. (looks sideways at AI suspiciously). Have been quite enjoying the recent 'running a business using a Speccy' bits of the show... Though it surprised me how many of the word processing, spreadsheet and database packages, that I thought were uber-professional at the time, were written in BASIC. I'd love to receive a letter from my bank on ZX printer paper."*

"I also quite like the type-in sections. I'm not sure why though, as I know before I see the results that the games are going to (a) not work first time, and (b) be completely rubbish! Does that make me a sadist or a masochist? Probably."



This looks like a still from one of those fancy Russian demos they like to do

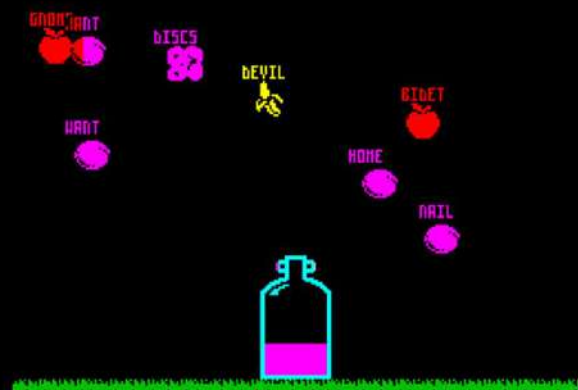
In 'Eddie Kid' you must fill up on milk so you can jump a bus! Ah diddums...



A deadly mix of maths and spelling? Count me in!



And here's 'Homebrew'. Wait a minute, Cauldwell's done this one before, hasn't he?!



UTTER TRIPE ***(Jonathan Cauldwell, 2011)***

This game is heavy on the humour... and the magick. The inlay contains a tall tale about a sorcerer inviting all *'tripe underwizards'* to the fiendish *'trial by cobblers'*. In other words, a load of deliberately rubbish mini-games. But are they bad in a good way, or do they just make you want to cry? Your thoughts, gentlemen?

Dave: *"There are absolutely HORDES of mini-games packed into one... Ace! It has the vibes of Bishi Bashi Special on the Playstation (though a bit less bonkers). It's got a good difficulty curve – I'm fairly quick on the old keyboard but things get frantic as the words get longer. It can be challenging to read certain text when things start moving very quickly, but I didn't get frustrated at any time. Anyway, turns out I'm great at spooling... err... spelling... doh, I'm out of time! The best I've managed so far is 37,600 with an accuracy of 96%"*

Al: *"Well this is different. How's your speed typing? Mine's decent actually due to a mis-spent youth of typing LOAD "" over and over. I used to enjoy the typing tests they gave you when you went to a temping agency, I always aced them, even though in real life they didn't serve any purpose at all! Utter Tripe throws a huge number of mini games at you, where you have to quickly type certain words in at the right time, to fill a jar or chop off people's heads or similar silliness. It's very well done and keeps you amused for quite a while actually."*

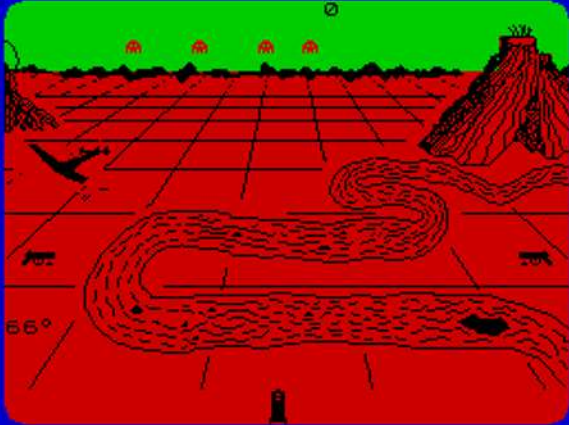
SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Nice work as I'd expect from Mr. Cauldwell and nice ditties as I'd expect from Yerzmyey. Mini-game-tastic!"*

9.5/10

Al: *"Wildly inventive, it's a long way from being utter tripe"*

7.5/10



Space Invaders gets over-engineered and has all the fun sucked out of it

'Pound Shop Spock' Haberdaber comes with his own range of blingy personalised jewellery

HIRE Haberdaber? ☾
1 yes 0 no



T-139: Gurm offers you his services for 1900 cases of NatoF.
T-129: Haberdaber offers you his services for 2000 cases of NatoF.



Devils Of The Deep sure is one garish surreal mess. Makes Transylvanian Tower look like Elite

I guess you're either in Team Kanga or not. Personally I dig it, but you know that



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: "So what Spectrum games can you guys honestly say are **utter tripe**?"

AI: "I'm trying to think beyond all the ones I've mentioned already on the site. I think some of the earlier attempts at sports games tended to be dire, like **Royal Birkdale**, despite its lush Thorpey load screen. Oh yeah, **Terror Daktil** didn't really work at all, despite great visuals. 4D my arse! I'm also going to unfairly nominate Keysoft's **The Key** for not predicting the advent of hyperloads, and thus forcing us to buy games, or more likely perfect our tape to tape technique!"

Dave: "Where do I start? Let's get rid of the turkey, er... elephant in the room – **Sqij!** I think we all know about that one, so let's move on quickly. When young Dave got his Speccy's keyboard membrane fixed at **Mancomp**, he was eagerly awaiting his '2 free games with every repair', so was ultra-disappointed to be given a rubbish educational title and **The Great Space Race**. Anyone paying £15 for that would probably have thrown themselves into the Manchester Ship Canal after playing it."

"The award for 'biggest quality gap between inlay art and game' must go to Richard Shepherd's **Devils Of The Deep**. It's a big pile of BASIC carp, despite the **LOAD** "" **CODE** required. But you know my choice for this one, right? Yep, it's that flippin' kangaroo again. How that pile of marsupial poop got a **Crash Smash** is beyond logic. AAAARRRRRRGGGGHHHH!!"

AI: "Hey, good idea Dave, I'll load up **KK** right now for a go. Great game!"



Is that the Sanchez cactus with a beard and a hat? 10,000 Needles coming...

I've tried saying "Mello" several times but this gate still won't budge



Jeez, the commentator here overuses exclamation marks even more than I do (!)



'Hero' wizard stands around and waits for Bilbo to cleave his skull



VRADARK'S SPHERE *(Sanchez Crew, 2018)*

Hold the phone, this one's by the illustrious Sanchez dudes, up to whom I have sucked severally in recent times. Well, they do do a good game, y'know. But this one's older than most, so can it really hold a candle to their recent offerings? This is a **rogue-like** game, to use a term I don't fully understand. Something to do with dungeons and treasure and monsters, right? No doubt the *rogueish* Davester will set me straight.

Dave: *"Well looky here, this looks very Rogue-y at first glance, it even seems to have some random level generation in it. And what a great inlay - I'm guessing that's Mr. Vradark with his "dangerous tooooooool." Having played it a bit, it's fairly simplistic. Not always a bad thing I suppose. You've basically got shooty magic potions and life potions. There's definitely some strategy involved in deciding what to pick up and when. One thing that's driving me mad though - why oh why (oh why) (oh why) can't you make your protagonist just **STAND STILL** for his turn??? Sometimes it seems to be impossible to manoeuvre yourself into a position where you can get a first attack in. Meh, who knows, maybe your wizard is on roller skates or something."*

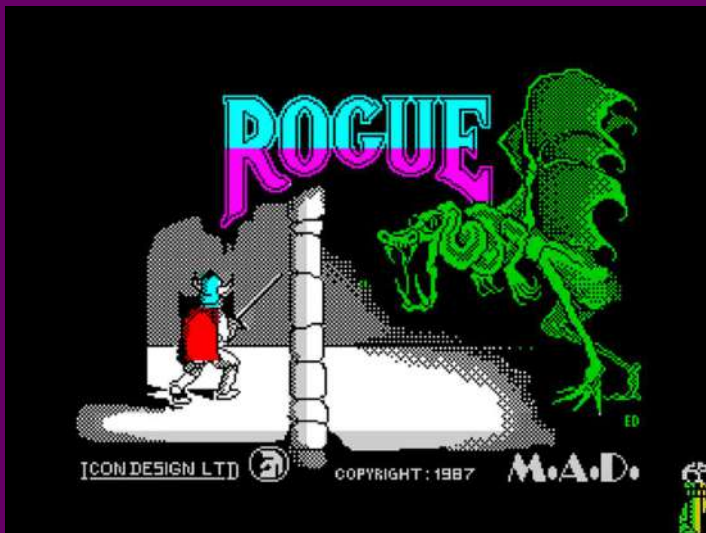
Al: *"At first I was afraid, I was petrified. At the thought that the Sanchezes might have produced a sub-standard game. After I splashed out 92p for the full version! So initially this game seems basic, with enemies only moving once you do, and in a rather unanimated manner. But I should have known better than to underestimate 'da crew'. After a few goes it transpires it's a fun dungeon crawler, which features new music on each level, the sort of quality touch one expects from these guys. Only problem is sometimes in the randomly generated map, the key is rather too close to the exit! Makes for an easy win though."*

"Apparently there's an updated version of this game out for the Spectrum Next. But let's be honest, it'll look like cr@p since it's on the Spectrum Next. Go on, sue me! It's not a REAL Spectrum..."

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Easy there, Al! You'll get complaints if anyone's looking. Vradark's Sphere is not a bad idea (rhymes), but it's slightly frustrating and simplistic for my dungeon hack preferences."* **5.5/10**

Al: *"Ha, little danger of that, mate! As for Vradark and his ball, I rather like it I must say. Dungeon life has rarely been so colourful and tuneful."* **8/10**



*"Come on Rogue, let your body
rogue to the music (rogue to the
music)"*

*Gandalf was right about those
mines of Moria. Full of
treacherous villains and scum*



*The border features this knight's
fave brekky - a fried egg*



*And so another Classic
Adventure begins. And ends if
you're as good as me*

At your feet all the water of
the stream splashes into a
20-inch slit in the rock.
Downstream the streambed is bare
rock.

s

You are in a 20-foot depression
floored with bare dirt. Set
into the dirt is a strong steel
grate mounted in concrete. A
dry streambed leads into the
depression.

About you can be seen

The grate is locked

GREAT...■

"Just one more thing..."

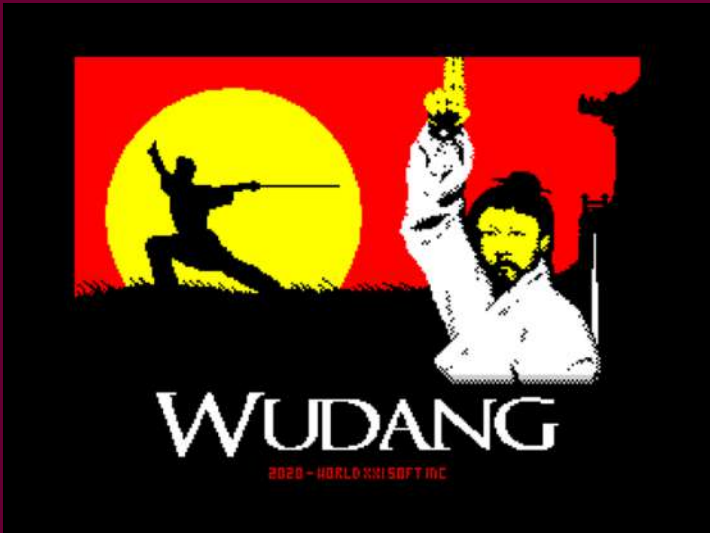
Columbo: *"Ever been stuck in a dingy Spectral dungeon? Good times and bad times - spill 'em!"*

Dave: *"Of course lieutenant! I spent most of my formative years in (metaphorical) dungeons, and jolly nice years they were too. In fact, I can't think of any particularly bad ones, though I was a bit disappointed with the implementation of **Knightmare**, which I thought might play a bit more like the series."*

*"Where do I start with the good ones? Well, we've got **The Oracle's Cave**, possibly the best (mainly) BASIC game I've played on the humble Speccy. Then there's the not-particularly-special-looking and not-particularly-well-known but incredibly engaging **Out Of The Shadows**. I quite enjoyed playing the two rogue-likes **Master Of Magic** and... err... **Rogue**. The former slightly more I think. **Swords & Sorcery** has a fantastic atmosphere to it, and trading insults with monsters is great fun. Though you really need to figure out where those flamin' pits are on the map. I never did finish it (don't even know if you can?). However, the entire podium for this one has to go to the legend that is **Steve Turner** - for his offerings of **Avalon**, **Dragontorc** and **Ranarama**. Three great games in a nice dingy environment! Pointy hats off to all three."*

Al: *"I think you've covered just about every game there, sir! I agree **Swords & Sorcery** was indeed a lot of fun... until you inevitably got gangrene and the game rudely crashed on you - not so funny in the days of long load times... **Classic Adventure** was pretty darn dungeony albeit in text adventure form, and was indeed a classic, the original 'Adventure' being done numerous times by numerous folk. I think I even tried to make my own game using Crystal's **Dungeon Master**. Don't think it was quite as user-friendly as **The Quill** though, from what I can vaguely recall, which allowed everyone to create their own dungeon adventures so readily."*

"Just a shame that Dave's own Quilled efforts about our good old school days are now lost in the mists of time, since my dad went and threw out my old (copied) C60s when I went to uni, in case the FBI raided our home..."

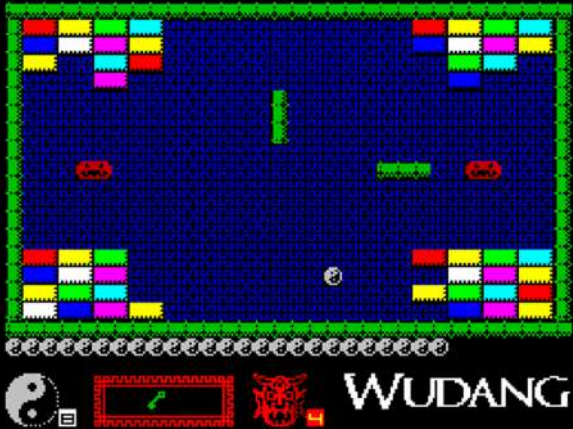


"And he did it all for the glory of love". Bleeuurrrgghh

Our hero runs along the roof of a very smart Chinese restaurant



Could this be the best mini-game in history that isn't in Grand Theft Auto?



Big Bad Buddha is the end of game Big Boss. Well maybe



WUDANG

(World XXI Soft, 2020)

Shame I don't know any **Wu Tang Clan** songs, as they'd go down a treat here. No matter, this game is one of those that is written in some sort of BASIC, and is apparently a remake of **Kung Fu 2** from 1991. Well, whaddyaknow. There's a long and detailed plot which I won't go into. Suffice to say you have to rescue your mate from the Purple Cloud Temple, and apparently there's a subgame at one point called '**Chinese Arkanoid**'. The mind boggles.

Dave: *"Wheeeeeee! It's quite a laugh running up walls and flying everywhere. I got my backside handed to me by the first dude I encountered playing on **MEDIUM**, so I switched to **EASY** as soon as I was dumped back on the menu screen. Even on **EASY** I found it got trickier later on, and the sorcerer dudes can easily catch you out. I suspect you'd have to have already reached enlightenment to play it on **HARD**."*

*"I guess this game mostly comes down to collect-the-keys, open-the-doors, with a bit of combat thrown in. The controls are very responsive, especially for **BASIC** (compiled?). Combat needs good reactions but seems fairly simplistic. I like the way the map is constructed, with outside-y and inside-y bits in a memorable pattern and great graphics. The **Breakout** game was a bit random (**TWO** paddles... WTF?!). I fluked my way through that one. And I couldn't quite work out the puzzle with the mice, despite spending quite a bit of time on it..."*

Al: *"Surely this can't be a **BASIC** game? It looks really nice and plays most honourably too. I love the way you can practically fly around the place like you're in **Crouching Gerbil**, **Hidden Donkey**, it's a really clever idea. If double-jumping is a thing, then why not this instead! The only trouble is, the swordfights seem a bit too difficult even on **EASY** level, which hinders your progress badly. I dug **Chinese Arkanoid** though, 2 bats in the middle of the screen and bricks around the edges. It's enough to drive you **Batty** (so sorry)."*

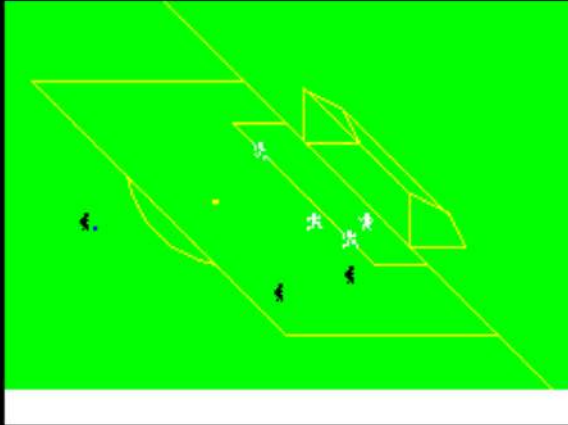
SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Overall a decent game - really doesn't feel like **BASIC**, as the keys are ultra-responsive. My only criticism is that a 'continue' option would be nice. After spending a bit of time getting relatively far through the game on one go (yeah, so I was playing on **EASY**, bite me!) I had a lapse of concentration and died, and couldn't really be bothered starting the key collection from zilch again."*

8/10

Al: *"Amazing for a **BASIC** game, even better than my very own **Bet Shop** (thankfully **MIA**)"*

7/10



Black Crystal sees you do battle as a "Misfit". That's different

Admit it - one of the most exciting moments in Spec-history



Even my terrible art abilities tell me we need a background here for maximum effect

Lack of punctuation! Capitals only! Espionage Island!

```
I AM IN AN AIRCRAFT
THERE ARE NO OBVIOUS EXITS
I CAN ALSO SEE :
A PARACHUTE WITH A CORD
A DOOR LEVER
TELL ME WHAT TO DO
```


"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: "What do youse guys reckon has been the best game written in BASIC? Or mostly in BASIC anyways."

Dave: "I suppose *Football Manager* was pretty decent for 1982. I never massively got into it, until it later got upgraded to the PC franchise that it became ("Eh?" - Ed). It was never the same since the beard-shaving..."

"I'm not going to count the 8,237 early versions of *Backgammon*. Arcade-wise, the only BASIC commercial game I can think of is *Mined Out*, though I didn't think much of that one. I'm sure there are more. There were quite a few dungeon hacks in BASIC that I enjoyed a bit - *Velnor's Lair* and *Black Crystal* spring to mind. And apparently *Journey's End* is quite highly regarded. The one standout for me out of all the games is *The Oracle's Cave*... Bet you saw that one coming! (Ba-dum tish). OK there is a bit of machine code for the movement/scrolling but hit that BREAK button and it's (otherwise) all there, baby! Awesome adventure game."

AI: "Personally I loved that first *Footy Manager*, I think the *Great Bearded One* got the balance just right for a strategic sports sim, and I thoroughly enjoyed getting *Tranmere Rovers* all the way to the top of Division 1 and winning the FA Cup. After that, I lost interest somewhat, but still a classic game for '82."

"I too enjoyed *The Ceefax's Cave* (hilarious) although I could make very little progress in it. Were those early Artic adventures in BASIC? Could be, maybe I'll nominate *Espionage Island*, just 'cos I like the title. The game itself wasn't that special, and clearly Artic hadn't picked up on the fact that you don't have to write everything in capitals on the Spectrum..."

Dave: "YEAH, ALL THE SHOUTING IN THOSE EARLY ADVENTURES SURE GAVE YOU A HEADACHE AFTER A WHILE."

AI: "TRUE DAT, AMIGO. TRUE DAT. OUCH."



Well this is all very nice, in the land of the magenta mountains

You play as Bubba, but the author admits he was tempted to call him Dink



The first dungeon is guarded by snakes and a Psycho Pig UXB

Got to love a Speccy in-joke. I never use them myself



XELDA: QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN APPLE

(Andrew Dansby, 2017)

According to the instructions, this game is a *tribute* to **Zelda**, you know, like that **Tenacious D** Song, erm, **Wonderboy** (*itself based on the coin-op*). But will this game actually be anything like that song, I mean, game? The instructions seem useful and entertaining, so take note, Dave, as I never read them properly for any game until I get stuck early on. Your quest is to reclaim the eponymous fruitage, as the world's gone to heck in a handcart since someone went and nicked it.

Dave: *"Ah - good old Zel... err.. **Xelda**. I see there's a disclaimer in the instructions, confirming there's absolutely no **Link** (ba-dum tish). This game is nicely presented with a plinkety-plonkety tune. I struggled with the sword attack collision detection (**Shortsword?** More like a potato peeler, it seems to have a range of 3 cm). Then I realised that you could just run past 90% of the nasties."*

*"Initially you're basically a dogsbody, going to fetch things for people repeatedly ("if you'd told me you needed that **EARLIER**, I could've picked it up when I **WAS IN THE FLIPPIN' FOREST**"). Fortunately the respawn rate of the wandering creatures isn't too high, so you can backtrack a little bit through screens quickly. Once I'd got into the (first?) dungeon I lost some patience; after aimlessly wandering around for ages with a visibility of about 2 feet, randomly finding a few levers, I gave up. I think it would've perhaps been preferable if the bits of the dungeon you'd explored became permanently lit, but there you go."*

Al: *"Ah, I knew the Speccy would suit this type of game – I said as much in my **Brunilda** review, back in part 1 of my li'l site! Pretty obvious, but still true. This game isn't bad either, if not quite in the same league. There are plenty of quests to embark upon, creatures to battle and people to annoy you. Graphics aren't bad and you even get a rather quiet tune. This is Part 1 apparently, so let's hope we see more from **Mr. Dansby**."*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"It feels as if it might be quite a big game, and I suspect I only discovered about 5% of it. Gameplay is OK, but I didn't find the whole thing particularly inspiring, and I **REALLY** didn't want to face any more dark dungeon-y bits."*

6/10

Al: *"Come on Dave, there's nothing wrong with a bit of darkness in a game! I reckon this is a good attempt at a **JRPG** type of game, and is well worth a play."*

8/10



Breath Of The Wild. My daughter's the one to ask about this kind of thing

One of many versions of FF7. "What a game..."



The nearest thing on the Spec – the brilliant Los Amores de Brunilda



How's one of my holiday snaps got into this review?



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: "You guys. Yeah, you! Have you ever played any **Zelda** games apart from this one (which is nothing to do with **Zelda** of course, my lawyers have asked me to point out)?"

Al: "Never been into them myself, mainly because they're a **Nintendo** thing, and I'm totally a **PlayStation** guy. Played one briefly on the **Wii** though, but didn't take to it. **Final Fantasy** is more my heavy, at least up to **FF10** anyway. Rally ho! Kupopo! etc. Dave even goes to see people play their choons, doncha pal?"

Dave: "Ah, you refer to **Distant Worlds**, yeah that's always good fun. But as for **Zelda** games, like you I wasn't really a **Nintendo** kid, though I did play one on the **Gameboy Colour**. Can't even remember which one now though. Sorry, that's a bit of a rubbish answer, but at least I didn't answer with a single word! I'm guessing we'll never see **Breath of the Wild** on the **PlayStation**, or the **Speccy** for that matter... **OR WILL WE???**"

Al: "No Dave, we won't. Hmm, that was a bit of a bust on the **Zelda** front, so I'll waffle on about my fave **Final Fantasy** games for a bit instead. **FF7** is clearly top banana, and I personally really enjoyed the **Remake**, and am very excited to see what they do in **Rebirth**. **FF8** I've never really taken to as much despite a few attempts, but **FF9** was a return to form. **FF10** & **FF10.2** weren't bad, but since those I've not really got into any of them; they've lacked the element of fun and even **Fantasy** recently in my book. Best to revisit the really ancient ones instead I reckon, as they're all good in their own way."

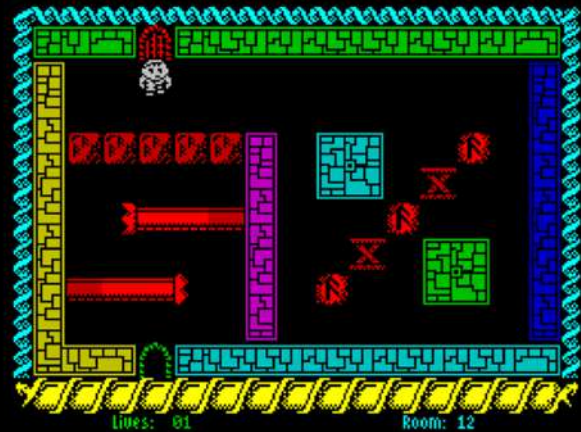
Dave: "..."

Al: "Oh, he's gone! Erm, I'm sure Dave would say that he likes most **FF** games, even including the quite annoying bro-fest that was **FF15**. But really he just likes fishing in them, if that's at all possible."



Ah, the look of love. Or is it bloodthirsty massacre?

Room 12 boasts some crushers that bring on Monty Mole flashback nightmares



Randomly the game turns into a text adventure on level 8. Should be Level 9...

Argh, where's the toilet? I've got the runes! ("Really, AI?" – Dave)



YANGA+ ***(Vitaly Serdyuk, 2021)***

There was a young Viking called **Yanga**, who strongly disliked **Kosmic Kanga**. Well, such people do exist... *cough, Dave, cough*. His girlfriend has been kidnapped by a dark wizard who wants to sacrifice her, so he can become a god. Urgh, what a pig! 60 levels of puzzlement await you, involving runestones and the usual sort of stuff you find lying around in dungeons, no doubt.

Dave: *"Well, this looks like an interesting puzzler, got a **Sokoban** vibe to it. I was a bit perplexed when I started - level 1 involves one move and it tells you a bit of the (absolute) basics, after which you're presented with level 2 which is a difficulty spike of Everestian proportions... Once you start groovin' through the levels it's pretty addictive though. The difficulty seems to fluctuate as you progress. Main downside is I think the 'lives' feature is a bit pointless, you don't really want to do the solved levels again, though emulator snapshots solve that issue."*

"After a bit you start encountering levels where 'things moving' requires a bit of reaction time; I thought I'd eventually get stuck on one of those, and level 49 has completely bamboozled me - there are only two runes!! What's that all about AI?? Two runes..! Not three..! It's impossible...! Aargh..! Now come on, what are you doing with that straitjacket...?!"

AI: *"It's for your own good Dave, and society's generally. Right then, a puzzle game here, so one might expect a certain lack of excitement. But this one has a definite swagger to it. It's colourful, noisy (even if the tune seems to go slightly **wonky** at times) and quite a novel twist on a familiar idea. You have to combine 3 blocks together without first combining 2 blocks, since that kills ya stone dead. As the game goes on, new elements are introduced, and generally it's cool, fool."*

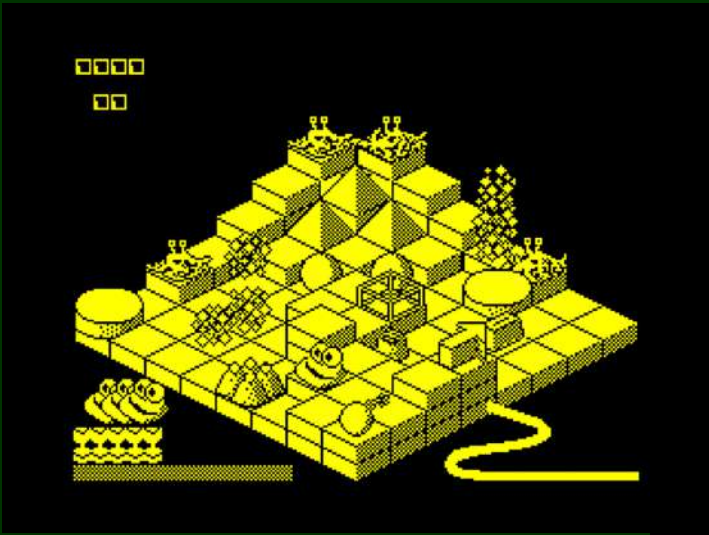
SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"(Kosmic) Yanga is quite a lot of fun, if a bit clunky and rough around the edges at times."*

8/10

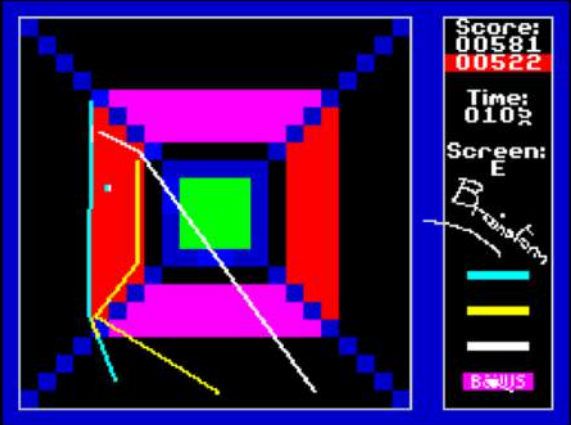
AI: *"This fun puzzler might even bring a smile to the miserable looking blokey on the load screen."*

8/10



Kirel by Addictive Games. Pretty sure Kevin Toms didn't do this one though...

Does El Stompo qualify as a puzzler, Dave? Well it's ace, so I'll allow it



Brainstorm lets you scrawl crazily on the screen, much like MS Paint

Spitting Image was so '80s it hurt. Is that Humphrey Bogart though?!



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: *"Riddle me this gents... Care to share any thoughts on Spectrum puzzle games?"*

Dave: *"Now there's a question, lieutenant... I don't think I played many 'back in the day'. Most seem to have appeared towards or after the end of the Speccy's commercial life, when I'd moved onto the **Amiga** ('pthooyey!') or **PS1** ('pthooyey!' though maybe a bit less). Well now.... There was **Deflektor**, which I thought I used to enjoy, until I tried replaying it recently and was left totally flummoxed, barely making it past a couple of levels. Another that springs to mind was that 3D isometric game **Kirel**. Takes a bit of trial and error to progress - you don't know what's under some of the hidden bricks when you start a level. Enjoyable though."*

*"Modern day Speccy-wise, there've been hordes of good puzzlers. A couple that immediately spring to mind are Jonathan Cauldwell's **W*H*B**, and Stonechat's **EI Stompo**. Nice graphics for both and awesome to play. Now, where did I put that crossword?"*

Al: *"I reckon Psion's **Scrabble** was the first I played, and what a great version it was, so long as you didn't cheat and override the computer's challenges constantly! Pete Cooke did a few good little puzzlers, like **Brainstorm** and **A Whole New Ball Game** on a Crash covertape. Special mention goes to **Split Personalities** for making a slide puzzle a great laff."*

*"Oh Dave, I've just had a go at your troublesome **Yanga** level, and lo and behold I've managed to sort it! I simply hung around and did very little, then the baddie became the third rune for some reason, and then all three came together, opening the door. Just call me **The Fixer...**"*

Dave: *"Wha? Let's see. Oh yeah... well whaddyaknow? Sometimes doing nothing at all really is the best course of action..."*



Watch yourself! There are killer dice in this game...

Good job there's a seat at the bar, there's nowhere to sit otherwise



<p>ITEMS</p> <p>Go Look Take Give Talk Use</p> <p>SCORE 010</p>	<p>Money Whiskey</p>	<p>Talk to Bartender</p> <p>"What will it be?" asks Lefty.</p> <p>You decide to have some whiskey.</p>
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<p>ITEMS</p> <p>Go Look Take Give Talk Use</p> <p>SCORE 010</p>	<p>Money Whiskey</p>	<p>Use Sign</p> <p>Yo, taxi!</p>
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This taxi's surely got a bit lost and should be in New York, not... wherever this is

I often go to a kids' disco holding money, a remote control, a rose and a hammer



<p>ITEMS</p> <p>Go Look Take Give Talk Use</p> <p>SCORE 035</p>	<p>Money Remote Rose Hammer</p>	<p>Talk to Bouncer</p> <p>"This is a private club. Go away!"</p>
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Z.X. LARRY *(Rafal Miazga, 2019)*

This year... together at last... *despite* popular demand... we give you... a **Rafal Miazga** and **Bumfun** (*cringe*) production! I'm almost overcome by excitement. What chaos could possibly ensue? This is of course another homage, this time to the dodgy 'barely acceptable in the 90s' **Leisure Suit Larry** titles. While this sounds dubious, it really does look like the Speccy has an authentic point and clicker on its hands. The ubiquitous King of Pointing and Clicking, HRH Dave VIII will explain further.

Dave: *"Oh 'ello, I do believe it's our friend Lawrence Laffer esquire. I have to say, despite the somewhat dubious content, I've enjoyed playing a few of these games. On the whole they're decent point & clicks with some interesting puzzles. Never finished the first one but it's nice to see a Speccy version. It's been some time so I can't attest to its authenticity, but it looks nice and colourful, and has a funky tune playing. Not a massive fan of the controls though. Even after getting used to them it felt like I was battling with the cursor all the time (especially when taking taxis). Also it would've been nice to see our Larry on-screen, but perhaps I'm expecting a bit much from our humble Speccy."*

AI: *"There's some great presentation on this unexpected conversion. The input method is pretty slick, moving your arrow around the screen in a quasi point and click stylee. The graphics are neat and colourful, and there's some nice music to enjoy too. The only downside for me is that the subject matter is probably best left in the past, and there are a few too many rather un-PC moments which make you wince. Maybe it's post-ironic, I dunno... If Rafa used the same interface for a whole different scenario, we'd be laughing. Maybe *Monkey Island?*"*

SCORING TIME!

Dave: *"Nicely presented graphics, and kudos to Rafal for taking this one on. The puzzles are fairly basic but I wouldn't have expected this one to be brought to 8-bits, so I'm not complaining."*

7/10

AI: *"Shows promise, but do we really want Leisure Suit Larry back in the year 2024?"*

7/10



Maybe it's best that the Speccy can't emulate this kind of thing accurately...

I'll pass on La Fox, thanks Dave. Here's one of many Dinamicly bosomed screens from those guys instead



Dave had this and it seemed pretty rad at the time, though mostly for being able to play a text-only game of footy with teams of hundreds. "The ball goes south. What next?"

I guess even Kratos has to stop being a fighter, and temporarily become a lover some time



"Just one more thing..."

Columbo: "Well I've had some fun grilling youse guys today, but I gotta go walk **Dog** now and try to avoid **Mrs. Columbo**. But before I go, have you stiffs ever played any games which are a bit, y'know, dodgy like?"

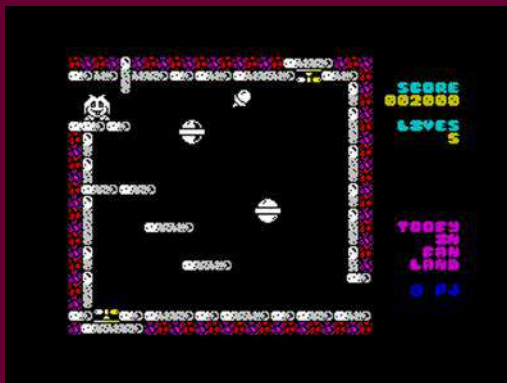
Dave: <tee hee!> <snigger!> <titter!> "Weeelll, I suppose as much as we loved the Speccy I think we'd have to agree it had its limitations with... errr.. the 'graphic quality' of what you might like to see as a young impressionable lad... I suppose you've got the infamous **Sam Fox Strip Poker** (incidentally I expect to see you post up the final screenshot in the game AI - go on, I dare you. "Er, no"-AI). One thing that astounded me was that there are actually hundreds of 'dodgy' games for the Speccy. I didn't realise the extent of it until you see how many x-rated games there are in the ZXDB archive. I suppose most 'top shelf' stuff back in the day appeared in the game posters & adverts. I'm looking at you, **Barbarian** (oh, that now reminds me of **Maria's Xmas Box**). And of course most ads by Dinamic (am I allowed to say 'nipple' on your site? 'Nipple!')

"After the Speccy's time I encountered the odd 'titillating' game. One was called **Biing!: Sex, Intrigue & Scalpels**, which is a fairly bizarre yet complicated strategy game in which I made absolutely zero progress. Another was a crappy CGI game called **Tender Loving Care**, which somehow brought back memories of **Red Shoe Diaries** on late night Channel 5. Ummm, errr.... "Which I never actually watched". OK that's it, you're not going to get me to admit to playing any more! I know your game, "let's all laugh at pervy Dave.""

AI: "Ah, you've seen right through me there! Well, for my part, on the Speccy I've probably not played anything remotely risqué, although I have witnessed some dubious (albeit strictly textual) goings on in a chat room in **Shades**, the modemy online adventure thing. Possibly the most embarrassing moment in a game for me has to be in **Fahrenheit** on PS1, where at one point you have to press keys to the right rhythm in order to, erm, 'do it' properly. With a laaaaady! Oh god, there are sex minigames in some **God Of War** titles too, aren't there? Total cringe."

ROLL OF HONOUR

10. ROGER THE PANGOLIN



9. TOOFY IN FANLAND



8. SOULS REMASTER



7. COMMANDO II



6. WUDANG

ROLL OF HONOUR

5. *KRPAT*



4. *YANGA+*

3. *ENCYCLOPAEDIA GALACTICA*



2. *ON REFLECTION*



THE WINNER!

UTTER TRIPES!

THAT'S IT, THE END!

It may have taken around two years from start to finish, but at length the entire alphabet of modern era Spectrum games has now been, erm, 'speed' reviewed. It was an audacious enterprise, but we eventually saw it through to its bitter end, and hopefully it has proved entertaining to three, maybe four, people!

*Huge thanks to **Dave** as ever - you can now move on with your life and your cheque is in the post sir!*

*And thanks also to **Lieutenant Columbo** for being our 'crumpled, down-at-heels detective' guide through the whole process. Couldn't have done it without ya, lieutenant!*







**WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT 'ZX SPECTRUM –
IT LIVES!!!'**

"Great site. Facts and funny" – Clive Townsend

"A gem of a site" – Dave Hughes

"Like the unwanted offspring of Crash and Y.S." – Boris Johnson

***"I stared at it for too long and it's given me the scrolls"
– Gandalf***

***"Are you not entertained?" – That guy from that thing
(not referring to 'ZX Spectrum – It Lives')***

"Enjoy it, or your money back. Yes it's free" – Al

"Why do I have to get dragged into this?" - Dave